

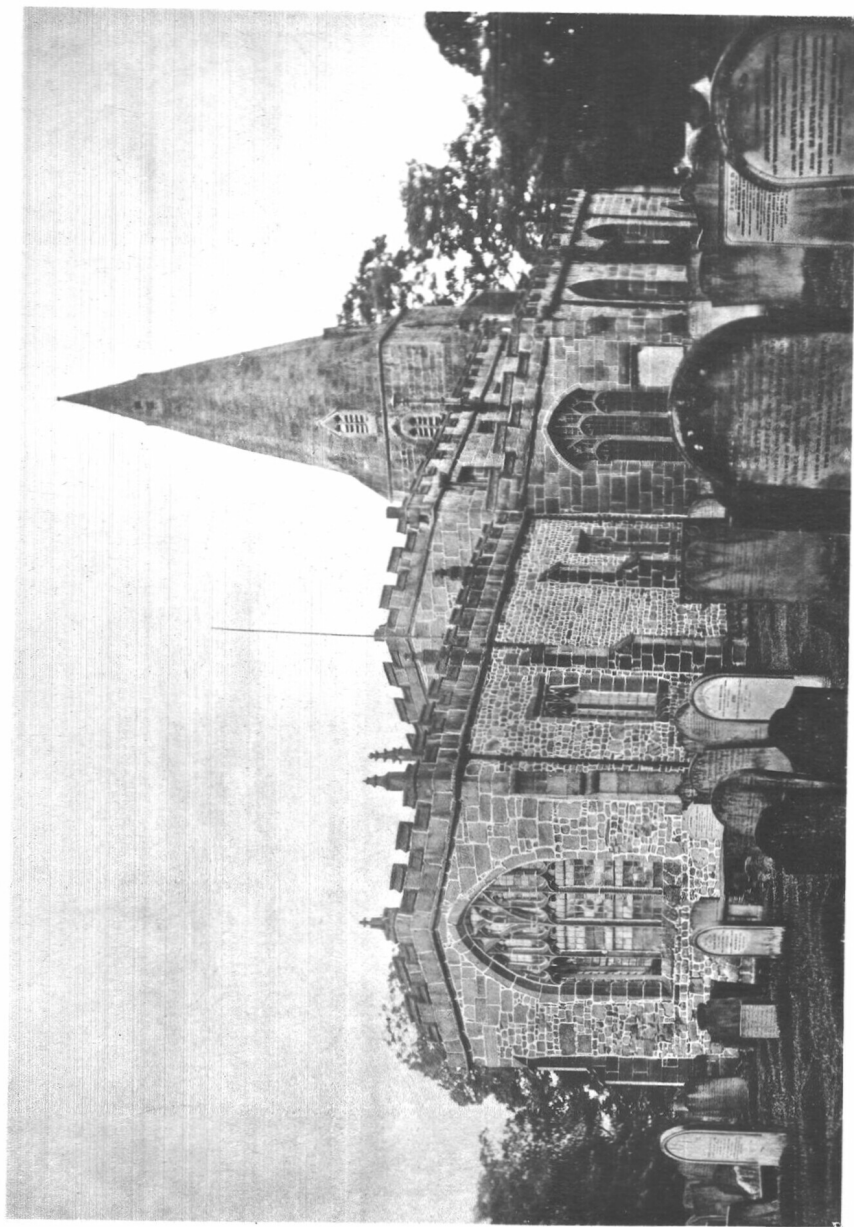
Notes on the Demolition of the Chancel of Hope Church.

BY ARTHUR COX.



AT the request of the Council of the Derbyshire Archæological and Natural History Society, I have put together the following notes, respecting what has occurred during the past year at Hope, in this county. The object in doing this is simply to lay before the members of our Society the facts of the case as they occurred. No comment from myself is necessary, or, I think, advisable; when the notes have been read, each individual member will be able to form his or her opinion as to how far the Society, through its Council and Vigilance Committee, was right in the action taken; and, also, as to whether the action so taken, did, or did not produce any effect. Any independent person is quite capable of forming an opinion as to what was right or wrong in the proposed plan, and can, if possessed of any archæological knowledge at all, decide upon the merits of the different authorities whose opinions are here expressed.

The first intimation of the proposed "restoration" of the Chancel of Hope Church was contained in a letter from the Vicar of Hope, the Rev. Henry Buckston, a member of our Society. The letter was addressed to myself as hon. sec. to the Society, and ran as follows:—



R. Keene, Photo., Derby.

HOPE CHURCH, DERBYSHIRE, JUNE 16TH 1881.

Vicarage, Hope, Sheffield,
February 16th, 1881.

DEAR SIR,

The Chancel of Hope Church having been pronounced "dangerous," it is about to be taken down; if you should wish on behalf of your Society to send a competent man to inspect the Chancel, I shall be glad to show him hospitality, and would meet him at Miller's Dale station. There is no time to lose; tenders for the new Chancel are to be sent in on or before Feb. 24th.

Yours truly,

HENRY BUCKSTON.

Arthur Cox, Esq.

This letter was received on the 17th February, just after the Council of the Society had met. Before the Council met again, I had received a letter from a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who is not a member of our Society, but who is well known as an authority on archæological matters. In this letter, referring to Hope Church, are these passages—"I am told that the Sedilia are to be moved further eastward"—"it seems a questionable kind of restoration to remove Sedilia, generally the most important landmark of any old Chancel. It is also proposed to remove the lead from the roof and substitute slate, and to raise the pitch of the roof"—"the Church is in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield; I can hardly believe that the patrons can know of the substitution of slate for lead, and the removal of a portion of the history of one of our oldest Peak churches"—"the architect's name is Abbott, of Sheffield." The Council of the Society met on the 7th of March, when it was resolved to send over Messrs. W. H. St. John Hope and F. J. Robinson, on the part of the Society, to Hope, in order that they might report upon the proposed plan of restoration. The Society also enquired as to the experience of the architect named Abbott.

The Vicar of Hope was informed of the proposed visit of Messrs. Hope and Robinson, and replied thus :—

Vicarage, Hope, Sheffield,
March 10th, 1881.

DEAR SIR,

I am obliged by your letter, and hope that the deputation will kindly let me know a few days before they come (even if they do not want a lift from Miller's Dale), in order that I may be at home to receive them. We are not attempting a "restoration" of the Chancel, but are intending to rebuild from the foundation; the present walls are in a "dangerous" state.

Yours truly,

HENRY BUCKSTON.

One of our members, a well-known enemy to "restoration," wrote to me, at this time, and said, "I never was more astounded in my life than to hear what you say about Hope Church. There is not a more delightful old church in Derbyshire, or one that would suffer more from the atrocities—that is too mild a word—of "the restorer." A little later, the same correspondent writes—"I have been over to Hope to-day; I have had an interview with the Vicar, and have looked the Church carefully over. I am decidedly of opinion that it would be an act of the most inexcusable Vandalism to pull the Chancel down. I cannot conceive how such a scheme can have entered into the head of any reasonable being." "I never knew until to-day that there was such a man as Abbott practising as an architect in Sheffield."

In the meantime, on the 12th March, Messrs. W. H. St. John Hope and Robinson went over to Hope, and, at the next meeting of the Council, their report was as follows:—

TO THE COUNCIL OF THE D. A. AND N. H. S.

Report on Hope Church, by F. J. Robinson and
W. H. St. John Hope.

Gentlemen—In accordance with your instructions, we proceeded on Saturday, March 12th, to Hope. The Vicar, the Rev. H. Buckston, conducted us over the church and explained the proposed restorations. The chancel of the church

is of "Late Perpendicular" architecture, very debased in style; the base-course, buttresses, piscina, and sedilia are of earlier date; the walls are built of coarse rubble-stone; the roof is of low pitch, underdrawn by a flat ceiling, and is evidently in a bad state of repair, and pushing the walls out of the perpendicular. We were unable to see the plans of the restoration, but were informed by the vicar that it is proposed—To rebuild the chancel from the foundations, with entirely new stonework; to replace the flat lead roof with one of a much higher pitch and covered with slates, entirely doing away with the present embattled parapet and pinnacles; to re-insert the piscina and sedilia further eastward than they are at present, making the sedilia all on one level, instead of retaining them in three steps; to change the present position of the side windows of the chancel, and to close the priest's door in the south wall; to re-lay the floor of the chancel with encaustic tiles, covering up several monumental slabs.

With respect to these proposed alterations we would submit—That, if it is considered necessary to rebuild the walls, the present base-course, buttresses, windows, priest's door, and parapet should be carefully taken down, and rebuilt with the same materials, and in the same position; that the pitch of the new roof should differ as little as possible from the present pitch, and lead should again be used as a covering; that the piscina and sedilia should not be removed in the contemplated re-building, nor any change made in their position or level, it being quite possible to arrange the chancel steps to suit them; that the monumental slabs on the chancel floor should remain in their present position and should not be covered up with encaustic tiles.

We are pleased to see that the ancient oak belonging to the church has been carefully preserved, and to hear that the new fittings for the chancel are to be copied from an ancient bench-end now standing.

FRED. J. ROBINSON,
W. H. ST. JOHN HOPE.

This report having been read, the Council unanimously passed the following resolution :—"That a copy of the report of Messrs. Robinson and Hope be sent to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield, the patrons of the Living of Hope, with an earnest request that they will use whatever influence they possess to prevent the wholesale destruction of the Chancel contemplated by the parish authorities. That a copy of the same report be also sent to the Vicar of Hope, a member of this society, with an expression of the earnest hope of this Council that the parish authorities will consent to modify their plans to the extent of the suggestions contained in the report." The copies of the report were sent accordingly. In the case of the Vicar of Hope the reply I received was this—

Vicarage, Hope, Sheffield,
April 12th, 1881.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of Messrs. Robinson and St. John Hope's report on Hope Chancel, and am obliged. I have also received a copy of a report from the Dean of Lichfield, made by Mr. J. Oldrid Scott.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY BUCKSTON.

Arthur Cox, Esq.

From the Dean of Lichfield I received this letter, from which it will be seen that the Chapter had been acting quite independently of this Society, and at the same time—

The Deanery, Lichfield,
April 12th, 1881.

MY DEAR MR. COX,

I think you will be interested to learn that as soon as I heard of what was proposed to be done at *Hope* Church, which was only about a fortnight ago, I made arrangements for Mr. Scott, our cathedral architect, to visit Hope Church, and to report to us upon the proposed alterations. I now enclose to you his Report, which I must request you to return to me.

Unfortunately, the day that I heard of these intentions, a faculty had been granted for the purpose of carrying them out; and this, without any communications having been made to us, the patrons of the Living! I have sent a copy of Mr. Scott's report to the Vicar, Mr. Buckston, and, though I am not very sanguine, I still hope that something may be done to abate the mischief, and to modify the plans.

Ever most truly yours,

EDWARD BICKERSTETH, D.D.

Arthur Cox, Esq.

Mr. Oldrid Scott's report was as follows :—

Stockport, April 6, 1881.

HOPE CHURCH, SHEFFIELD.

My dear Sir—I have to-day visited the church at Hope as requested by the Dean and Chapter. It is of two ages—the steeple at the west end, the nave arcades, and the chancel arch being Middle Decorated and the remainder of the church Perpendicular.

The style of the chancel as it now appears is wholly of the 15th century, though it seems to have been built somewhat before the other late additions were made.

It is on a large scale, and is unusually long. In other respects it is perhaps inferior to the rest of the building, its walls being of small and rough stones and the tracery of its windows having a look of rudeness, which is, however, by no means devoid of interest.

The chancel, like the nave, had originally a high pitched roof without parapets, but, as far as I can judge, this could only have remained for a very short time, for within a few years of the erection of the chancel it is clear that the whole church was re-cast and given its present late character. A clerestory was added to the nave, the aisles were rebuilt, probably on a larger scale; flat roofs, covered with lead, were substituted for the older ones, and battlemented parapets with

pinnacles erected on every part of the building. These changes were made in the chancel as well as in the body of the church, a flat roof and parapets taking the place of the higher roof with eaves.

In the beginning of the 17th century repairs were carried out in the chancel and elsewhere; the eastern buttresses are of this date and the upper part of the chancel pinnacles. There was a good deal of woodwork introduced at the same time.

Internally, the chancel is peculiar from its length and from the unusual pattern of the window tracery. The windows in the side walls are placed towards the east and west ends, leaving a blank in the centre. The sedilia are plain but of good character, and by their arrangement in three levels probably show the position of the ancient steps.

The roof, which I had opened in two places, seems to be in very good condition, except the wall plates, which as usual have decayed; no doubt a portion of the rafters, too, require renewal or splicing. The present roof has one objection from its cutting off the extreme point of the east window and falling below the top of the chancel arch.

The side walls are a good deal out of the perpendicular, and appear to be badly constructed, being built for the most part of small and short stones. In this it differs from the remainder of the church, which is all faced with square ashlar. The plans, which have been prepared by Mr. Abbott, provide for a complete reconstruction of the chancel. The walls are to be taken down and rebuilt. The windows are to be new, the old patterns of tracery being followed, but their positions are altered, except the east window.

The sedilia is to be re-used, but its three seats are to be brought to one level, and it is to be moved further east. The battlements are to be done away with, and a high roof of pitch-pine substituted for the present flat oak roof.

The floor levels are also changed, three steps being placed at the entrance of the chancel instead of one; and those steps which exist at the east end, and which, from their agreeing with

the various levels of the sedilia, are probably original in their positions, are to be done away with, one step being provided at the altar rail.

In my opinion the guiding principles in this, as in all other restorations, should be to make as little alteration in arterial features as is practicable, and I confess I do not see any sufficient reason for the changes which are proposed.

There is no doubt the walls of the chancel are in a bad state, and to some extent may need rebuilding. This seems to me to apply to the centre portion of each of the side walls, that is to say, to the long blank spaces between the windows. The remainder might probably be dealt with in the usual way, by bonding and grouting, with such under-pinning as the state of the foundations may need.

The window tracery should be repaired and re-used. I see no difficulty in doing this; it is not all seriously decayed, though it requires resetting and some new stone. It will be far more interesting treated thus than if copied in the new windows. The position of the windows and the sedilia should certainly be retained just as at present, as well as the levels of the latter and the steps indicated by them. One effect of this would be to bring the altar rail further west than is usual, but no inconvenience would result, as there is ample length in the chancel. The long space free from windows would be very useful if a chamber for the organ should be found necessary; it might be provided by forming an arch in the north wall, with a shallow recess for the organ, and the vestry behind.

The old oak cill of the chancel screen remains, and shows that there was but one step at this point. This should, I think, be kept too, the steps would then be as follows:—one at the chancel arch, one at the altar rail, two opposite the sedilia, and one round the altar.

Turning now to the roof. There is no doubt that there was once a high roof, but the existing one is of the same age as the greater part of the church, and with its battlemented parapet agrees with the character which has been given to the whole

building by its re-construction in the 15th century. Therefore, to do away with the parapets and to substitute a high roof would certainly throw the chancel out of harmony with the rest of the church without, as far as I can see, any compensating advantage, excepting that the defect I have mentioned arising from the points of the east window and chancel arch being cut off by the flat roof would be removed. This may, however, be got rid of in a much more simple manner by raising the present roof a foot or rather more without altering it in any other way. This need not affect the parapets. It would probably be necessary to omit the western tie beam to clear the chancel arch completely, the principal rafters over it being kept.

These are the points in which I would suggest the proposed plans might be altered so as to effect a more conservative restoration. I am convinced that the result would be far more interesting, and give greater satisfaction than if the chancel were dealt with in a more sweeping manner. I am glad to hear that all the old panelling is to be retained; no doubt the same will be the case with the monumental slabs. In rebuilding the chancel walls it would be well to retain something of the present character of walling, as this is evidence of their age differing from the rest of the church.

Believe me, my dear sir, yours very faithfully,

J. OLDRID SCOTT.

The Very Rev. the Dean of Lichfield.

The permission of the Dean and Chapter was obtained, and Mr. Scott's report was published, together with that of Messrs. Hope and Robinson, in all the local papers. The Dean, in giving his consent to the publication of the report said, "It may help the cause of church restoration on sound principles in future cases. I am much disappointed at the result of my efforts in the case of Hope." Many independent letters appeared in the papers, and among them one from the Rev. J. Charles Cox, author of the "Churches of Derbyshire," which was to this effect—

To the Editor of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*.

THE "RESTORATION" OF HOPE CHURCH.

Sir,—A copy of your paper of the 9th inst. was recently forwarded to me containing the valuable letters of Messrs. Bagshawe and Addy, on the projected treatment of the churches of Eyam and Hope. My friend, Mr. Addy, therein made an appeal to me to give some public expression of my opinion. I do not know that anything I can say will have any special weight, but as one who spent the better part of eight years in gathering together historical and other notes respecting the ancient churches of Derbyshire, I claim your indulgence for a brief expression of opinion. Other engagements have prevented me writing before, but I have privately done what little I could to check any hasty treatment of Hope Church.

I regard the chancel of Hope Church as by far the most interesting unrestored chancel in the whole of Derbyshire, and when, therefore, I heard from a clergyman, far more competent on questions of ecclesiology than anyone else in the county, of the proposed wholesale alterations, I at once ventured to put myself in communication with the patrons of Hope, the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield. The hon. secretary of the Derbyshire Archæological Society had already, I believe, received several protests from different sources. An unofficial letter from the patrons was at once despatched to the Vicar of Hope, and the matter was brought formally before the Chapter at their next meeting. Most unfortunately the faculty for the destruction of the chancel had been granted by the Chancellor on the previous Monday. In some other dioceses it is, I understand, the practice to always acquaint patrons with any application for a faculty; and I believe that one good result of the stir that is being made about Hope will be to bring about such a habit at the Lichfield Court. As it was, a faculty was granted without any cognisance on the part of the Dean and Chapter, and this precludes them from any formal and technical opposition.

The report of Mr. John Oldrid Scott, made at the request of the Chapter, as well as the report of the Derbyshire Archæological

Society, on the proposed changes will already have reached you. The latter report ought to carry much weight, as one of the gentlemen signing it is diocesan architect, and the other a skilled archæologist of growing repute. As for Mr. Scott, those who are acquainted with his work recognise in him all the ability of his father, coupled with the conservative caution that characterised Sir Gilbert's riper years. I have not the pleasure of knowing the Vicar of Hope, but I cannot imagine it possible that he will persist in any hastily conceived plan of restoration, so destructive of history, when a better course has been so courteously pointed out in the able reports to which I have referred.

If the authorities at Hope insist on carrying out Mr. Abbott's original plans, I can only say that it will be the most wanton destruction of historic work ever perpetrated in the county. I use the words "most wanton" deliberately, for though better work than that at Hope has been destroyed during the past century, and even during far more recent years, still not one of these other cases of Vandalism will have been such a gross instance of sinning against knowledge as the overthrow of Hope chancel after Mr. Scott's report. I cannot bring myself to believe that the Vicar or those in charge of the funds, will persevere in their original plans; but, in case any such determination should be shown, might it not be wise for those who have promised to subscribe to the work to withhold for the present their moneys? This could be done in all fairness, when an architect of worldwide repute has reported that much which was represented as necessary is in reality unnecessary.

Permit me one other remark. Any architect who may persist, in the face of Mr. Scott's report, in pulling down Hope chancel, must inevitably utterly ruin his reputation. Can anyone wish to be handed down to posterity as the unnecessary destroyer of an historic building, rich in interest, and abounding in reverent associations with the faith once delivered to the saints?

Faithfully yours,

J. CHARLES COX.

Christ Church Vicarage, Lichfield,

27th April, 1881.

At a meeting of the Council on the 9th of June, we heard that the plan of demolition had been modified—at least to the extent of making the new roof flat, and of oak, so that we felt some good had been done, and that more might follow. On the 11th of June, however, I received a letter telling me that the Chancel of Hope Church was to be taken down, bodily, on the 16th. There was no time to summon the Council, and I felt compelled to take some immediate steps. After consultation with the Rev. J. Charles Cox, and with the approval of the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield, it was arranged for Mr. J. Charles Cox and Mr. Irvine to go over to Hope at once, to see what was to be, or could be done. Mr. Keene also went over to Hope the same day and took the photograph of the church, which appears with this account. A fortunate circumstance also was that the Lord Bishop of the diocese was at Hope the same day. After his visit to Hope, Mr. J. Charles Cox wrote the following letter to the D. A. and N. H. Society :—

THE LAST OF HOPE CHANCEL.

TO THE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE OF THE D. A. AND N. H. S.

GENTLEMEN,—Hearing last Friday from the Dean of Lichfield that the roof of the old chancel of Hope Church, from which the lead had some weeks ago been stripped, was to remain untouched until after the 16th inst., and learning also that the accuracy of the reports on the chancel, made for the Dean and Chapter by Mr. J. O. Scott, and for our Society by Messrs. Robinson and Hope, were being challenged and seriously called in question, I communicated with the hon. sec. of the D. A. and N. H. S. on the subject, and it seemed to both of us highly desirable that another visit should be paid to the chancel before its demolition, now that the walls and roof were thoroughly exposed. Messrs. Robinson and Hope being both absent from home, at the suggestion of your hon. sec., and with the approval of other members of the Society who were consulted at Lichfield, Mr. J. T. Irvine was invited to accompany me to Hope. Mr. Irvine, who is a well-known antiquary and writer in archæological

journals, has recently had the charge of the restoration of the cathedral churches of Wells and Rochester, and of the abbey church of Bath, and is now clerk of the works at Lichfield Cathedral. A more competent and thoroughly practical judge on the vexed question of 'restoration' it would not, I suppose, be possible to secure.

We visited Hope on the afternoon of the 16th inst., and found the chancel cleared of all its fittings; the panelling, and in many places the plaster, removed from the interior wall, the flat ceiling cleared away, and the lead, with much of the thin planking upon which it rested, taken off the roof. It was therefore now far more easy than heretofore to form an accurate opinion as to the age and durability of the old chancel.

Mr. Irvine and myself examined the roof and walls with all possible care, and we had the advantage of the presence of Mr. Hill, the courteous builder, who has taken the contract for this unfortunate demolition, but who will be better remembered by the excellent way in which he has carried out other real restorations in this district. Mr. Irvine has kindly promised to make for you a detailed report, and I will therefore content myself with a few general remarks, independent of the more valuable opinions he may have formed.

The roof has been a good plain example of Perpendicular work, and some of the timbers clearly showed that they had been previously used in a Decorated or fourteenth century roof. Of the four tie-beams, three were in good condition, and one badly decayed in a place on the south side where it is joined by a purlin. A small portion of the purlins would require renewing or splicing with new oak, and the damaged tie-beam would require re-backing and pinning up. The greater part of the rafters would have to be replaced. I have seen old church roofs in quite as bad, or worse, condition as this, which have amply repaid conservative treatment. As Derbyshire instances, I could mention Youlgreave and North Wingfield. I walked about everywhere across the old roof, repeatedly traversing the damaged tie-beam, and could see no reason for anticipating any immediate danger from its condition. I

should think the roof might have safely remained untouched for another quarter of a century at the least, and with careful restoration would have lasted just as long, nay, probably longer, than a new one.

The masonry of the chancel is of peculiar interest, and in this respect quite differs from the aisles, which were entirely re-cased with new work in the fifteenth century. At that time the chancel was strengthened with large buttresses, and windows of Perpendicular tracery inserted, but the older masonry and the Decorated base plinth remained. At least five different changes could be readily traced in the chancel walls, of five distinct periods—Early English, Decorated, Perpendicular, restoration of 17th century, restoration *circa* 1800. The walls of this chancel would, in my opinion, have remained for many a generation as a monument of an historic church, even if quite untouched; and if they had only been under-pinned, and perhaps one single bay rebuilt (but of the old stone), would have told just the same tale to posterity for four or five centuries. There seems no sort of an excuse for the new windows; the tracery of the large east window and of the four side windows is in the main good, sound, and fresh. It is far preferable to the copy of the old work now, alas, lying in the churchyard, ready for immediate erection. Great care has undoubtedly been taken with the new tracery, but it quite fails to reproduce the boldness and crispness of the Perpendicular cusps of the old east window. The parapet stones, one side of which were already flung down, are, with an occasional exception, in most excellent condition, and even more durable from their hardening with exposure than their successors.

We understood that the active work of demolition was to begin on the morning of the 17th instant, so that by the time this letter reaches you I fear the walls will be levelled. But in view of possible proposals of like character with regard to other old work in Derbyshire, I should wish to add this remark, viz., that if partially decayed roofs and walls that slightly deflect from the perpendicular are to be the reasons for complete demolition, there is not an old church in the county which should not come down, and the

Cathedral Church of Lichfield ought long ago to have been levelled with the ground.

Though not successful in staying the destruction of the old chancel, our society is to be congratulated upon having secured three most important modifications of the original scheme of the architect. Firstly—the notion of a high-pitched roof, which would have completely destroyed the character of the church, has been abandoned; secondly—English oak has been substituted for pitch-pine for the timbers of the new roof; thirdly—the sedilia are not to be reduced to one level.

“I cannot help hoping that two other modifications may yet be gained. Firstly, the rebuilding in the new chancel of the old priest’s doorway, which is in good preservation and of two distinct periods; secondly, the placing of the new side windows in the same position as the old ones. With respect to this latter point, I would remark that in the old chancel the middle of the three bays on each side was unpierced with Perpendicular windows (whatever may have been their earlier condition), and it is now proposed to leave the bays nearest the east end unlighted; but surely this decision would be contrary to the general use of old custom as well as to the canons of ecclesiastical propriety.

It may also be well to note that one or two of the inscribed tombstones that form part of the floor of the chancel had been dislodged at the time of our visit but not removed, and that the remainder were in position. It is to be hoped that these memorials will be either carefully removed or covered up during the demolition, otherwise their destruction by falling beams or stones seems highly probable.

Photographs of the interior and exterior of the chancel were taken for the society, on the 16th, by Mr. Keene, of Derby.

Deeply regretting that the generous and well-meant intentions of the subscribers to the new chancel of Hope Church could not have been led into a less harmful direction,

I remain, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

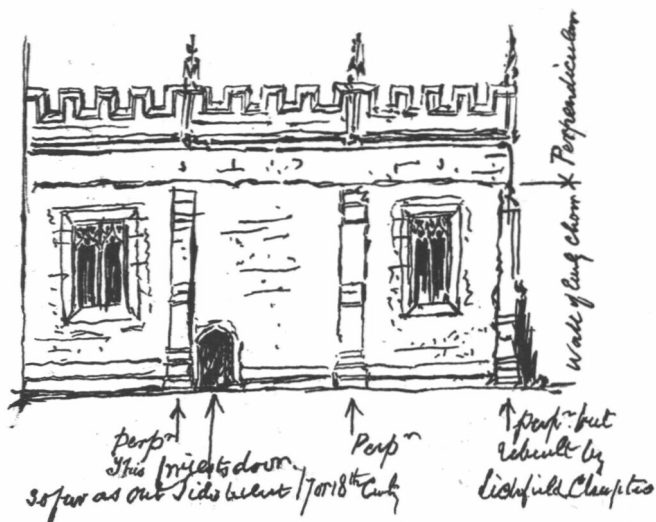
J. CHARLES COX.

Christ Church Vicarage, Lichfield, June 1, 1881.

The following letter was also written by Mr. Irvine to Mr. Cox :—

DEAR SIR,

Having yesterday visited Hope Church, I will now, in reply to your request, put in writing a report on the general state of the fabric of its chancel, then standing empty of all fittings. The lead removed from the roof timbers of the said choir, together with the whole stone work of the battlements of south wall. Those parts of the roof timbers most decayed having also had the thin oak boarding removed, on which the lead rested. The chancel is of good length, and of fine width and height. The architectural remains prove it to consist of parts of three successive rebuildings [at least], in early times. Besides which it also presents traces of some two, or it may be three, sets of modern (eighteenth or nineteenth century) repairs, executed probably at the cost of the Chapter of Lichfield. Time not allowing of sketches being made,



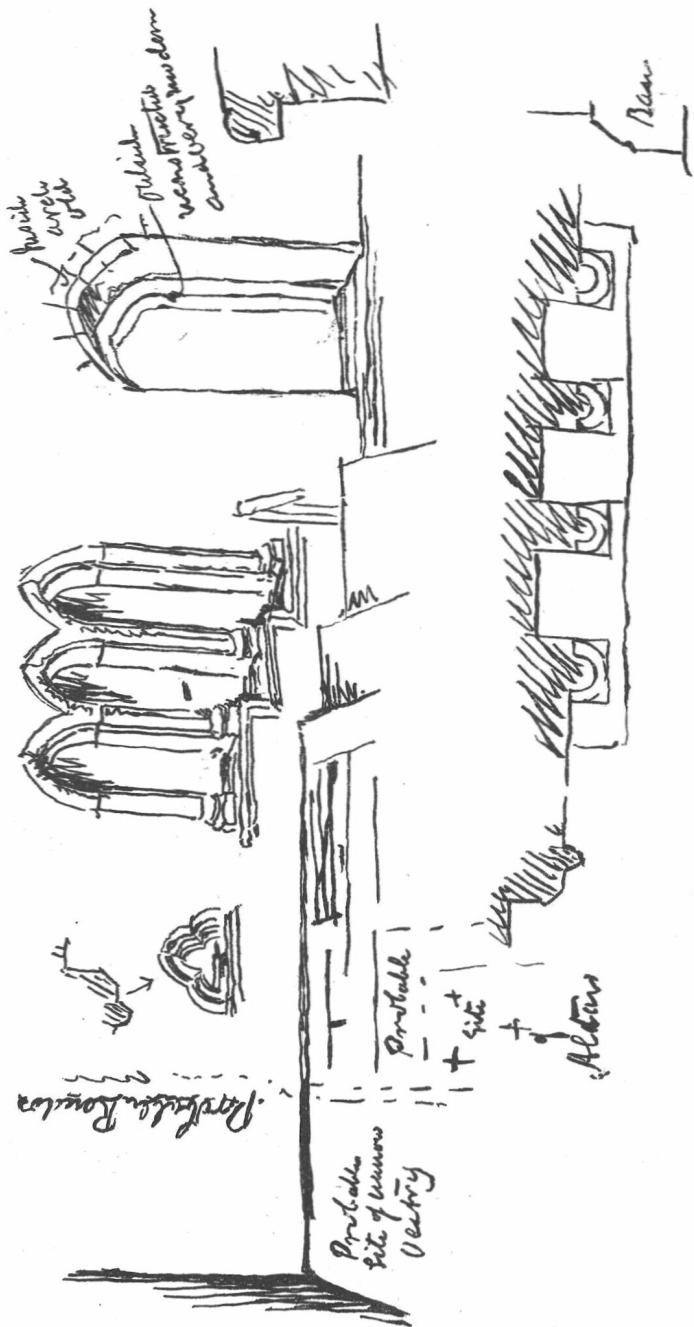
I am obliged to illustrate from memory, but believe the rough mems. given will be found not much different from

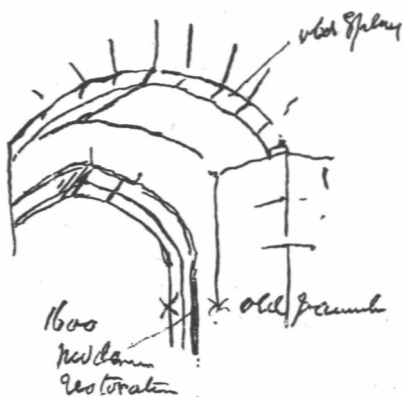
original. The greater part of the general walling is of early date, the material being of small, chop-faced stones, which material is also continued in that part of the wall where at top it had been raised in Perpendicular times, [which narrow strip contains dressed blocks, the remains of the older copings and quoins seen as irregularly introduced into it]. The lower walling represents probably the work of the Early English period, though no other moulded parts remain save only the sedilia (seemingly transitional in date Norman to E.E.). These are three in number, each raised a step above the other, and enable the original levels of the floor to be easily recovered, save in the case of the front step, and what may have been the division at junction with nave. Eastward of these seats is found a piscina of Decorated date, placed so far from the east wall, that in all probability the old altar stood free of this wall in front of a stone or wooden reredos, having behind it a small narrow vestry, somewhat as yet remains at Tideswell Church. As above stated, the early church has left, beyond these seats, but few remains. A slight fragment of the *eastern* jamb of an opening a little west of the altar steps in the *inside* of the north wall [*only*] presents what may have been the entrance to an external vestry on that side. And externally, in the east wall below the sill of the present east window, a slight line appears to mark where the bottom beds of the sill or sills of the early triplet lights rested.

The chancel received its first great change during the Decorated period, when considerable alterations also went on in the nave. To this time and age belongs the old plinth of choir walls, together with the sill and jambs of the present east window, though tracery; and possibly also it of side windows, the piscina *inner* arch of priest's door trace of any Norman or earlier throughout. Though the set



the old plinth of
sill and jambs of
not its arch and
may be the jambs
in choir, and
(south wall). No
walling is found
of the roof had





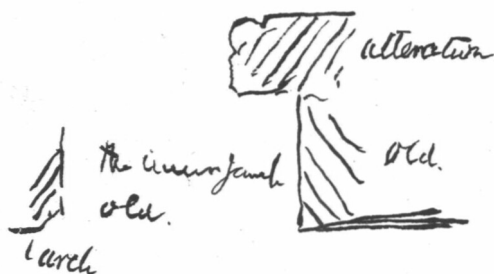
In Piece of door

As outer jamb was window



Inter med. Ven arch
over side windows.

Like spire. Had
no spire. or angle



spread the early walling, yet singular to say no evidence of any buttresses present themselves even in the Decorated additions, unless the fact of the diagonal plan of the angle buttresses may have been a suggestion obtained from destroyed ones of that

period. But there is no doubt that its roof (made anew) was higher than the first, and certainly thus produced a further deflection of the walls outward.

In Perpendicular times, a grand and general recasting of the whole nave and its aisles took place. The nave receiving the addition of an ample clerestory, leaving traces of the older and lower roof and its weather moulding against east side of west tower. This nave clerestory necessitated a flat roof for its covering, and this then led to the recasting of the upper walls of choir; a proceeding effected by the removal of its former high roof. The taking down of the east gable (then of high pitch) so low as the springing of east window, which old window would

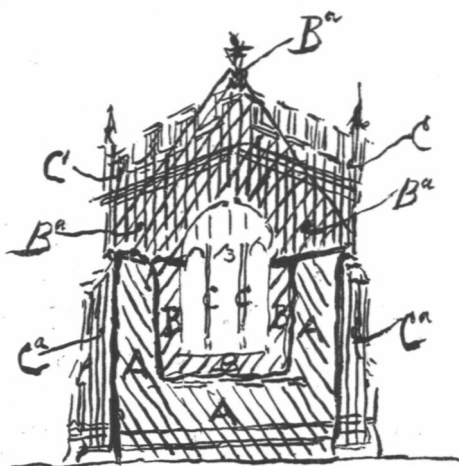


Diagram of East end.

- A. First work
- B. Dec^o. B^a B^a B^a removed for Perp. work.
- C Perpendicular
- C^a C^a perpendicular
rebuilt in very recent times.

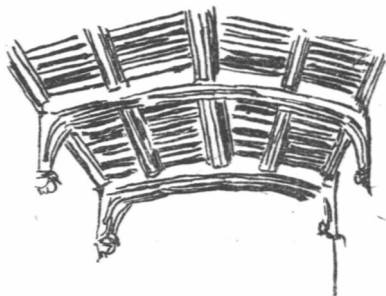
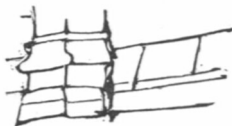
most likely have been spared had not its apex been too high for the new gable. Retaining its sill and jambs, which received new mullions, tracery, and arch, lowered to the necessities of the new design. The side walls were raised by building thereon some three feet or so, and a fine embattled parapet added, with dwarf pinnacles over the centres of buttresses, which last were now built up to the older side walls.

The roof was kept at a little lower pitch than that of the nave, thus rendering the present design most perfect, when considered in connection with the spire and dwarfish tower. Indeed a most remarkable and excellent example of the ability of the architects of the middle ages to produce a beautiful and harmonious whole, even when the difficulties to be overcome were very great indeed. This, I think, will be the conclusion of everyone who has had the good fortune to see the old church—prior to its proposed destruction—from the road entering the village of Hope from Tideswell.



Of this a very considerable amount of the admirable balance of lines and grouping will be destroyed when the proposed equalising of the planes of the two roofs is effected; and more especially so by the alteration in height of the side buttresses intended to be made in the rebuilding. The present old ones having been solely considered in connection with the Perpendicular rebuilding and its design.

The chancel roof is formed of four tie beams, one at each wall, and the others at points between, corresponding with the lines of the added buttresses of the same period. These last have plinths of their own, quite regardless of the earlier plinth of a simpler description, which remain between them.



These buttresses are narrow, being only in their lower stage 1ft. 6in. wide by a projection of about 2ft. 4½in.

The roof has a moulded and ridge-piece and principal tie beams. The ends of these tie beams



rest on curved braces on stone corbels, placed about the level of what was the top of the early walls. The present finish of wall externally is the above-mentioned embattled stone parapet, resting on a simple stone string. This has at angles and over each buttress a dwarf pinnacle, with crocketed top, of which most, if not all, have been

wall plate, with purlins and purlins, also moulded. rest (see above rough and ashlar, supported

at various times repaired and renewed in rude fashion by the Lichfield Chapter. The rafters of the roof are a simple square in section, covered with thin split oak boarding to receive lead. These rafters numbered about eight in all bays, save that at east, where there may have been one more. Unfortunately this roof cut off a small bit of the points of the east window and of chancel arch.

As before mentioned, the levels of floor are doubtful at west end, and as the chancel arch had been hoarded off, speaking with doubt (and it may be liable to correction), the old levels appeared to have been one step at chancel arch, then level to beyond priest's door, where a *broad* step, agreeing with lowest seat of sedilia was met; next, two narrower and following rise of the other sedilia seats had existed. East of which the floor had been one level, save that on it had stood the altar step, *not* reaching the side walls.

The lower part of the walls, as seen in section through some of the original putlog holes of the very early work (which were quite open from side to side, the closing materials having been taken out by the builder) appeared to be in a very good state; but of those open, unfortunately, none were in the central bay where the state of the wall was worst externally.

It therefore remains but to state what was actually defective and generally what works were necessary to place the choir in a perfectly safe state for at least the next 300 or 400 years.

The defects were :—

1st. Walls gone over.

2nd. Cracks existing *in east wall*, produced by No. 1.

3rd. Damage of window tracery.

4th. Roof timbers decayed.

5th. Repairs required of stone parapet and pinnacles.

6th. Repair lead of roof, down pipes, and drainage.

Of the last, No. 6.—As the lead had been *entirely removed*, and the down pipes might fairly be reused, it need scarcely be further entered on.

No. 1.—*Walls gone over*.—This had come down partly from

the very first chancel, the mass of whose small stone walling had been suffered to remain. The Decorated roof had added a considerable share; nor had the mischief wholly ceased afterwards, probably from the culpable habit of making graves close to the wall. And the foundation of the first choir wall had perhaps not reached down to a solid foundation. On, however, testing the worst places on both sides and the face of the worst buttress, it was found that the very worst bit was about seven inches or so over; but a great part was but to small amounts. The above dimension was not only at the very worst possible place, but also in the whole height of the wall. There was, however, no real danger to the structure, had proper remedies been applied, by providing that the whole walls of the chancel should have been very carefully underpinned, excavations for such purpose to have gone to a solid bottom, and extended one foot six inches under walls. To have been executed in short lengths of five to seven feet at a time, commencing simultaneously at extreme points, and filling in with a first deposit of a bed of concrete, two feet six inches deep, and extending forward at least in front of old wall to the extent at base of not less than one foot nine inches, composed of clean gravel and cement, or strong hydraulic lime. The space above to be carefully built up with flat, broad rough stone, laid in cement to a slight batter, so as to finish at top, not less in projection than nine inches before plinth of wall, and also of the later buttresses, under which, of course, the concrete, etc., should also be laid, and the stone work built.

No. 2.—Cracks in east wall.—These arose from the former cause, in a principal sense, but have received damage by the line of thrust of the upper part of east gable, being now of course passing at a lower angle. To remedy them at a former time, the Chapter of Lichfield appears to have had the old diagonal buttresses at the two angles taken down and rebuilt. But unfortunately this had not been done properly, neither fresh foundations of a proper sort, nor large bonding stones connecting the new work to the old wall, as it ought to have been done, appear to have been used; though the buttresses *themselves* appear fairly

built, [though with, as it might be expected, scant attention to the old details]. However, if under-pinning, as above described, had taken place, and good solid bonds, three in number, to each crack had been inserted in cement the joint being cleared out and run full of ditto, and carefully pointed up, they would have been perfectly safe. Or better still as regards the *architectural appearance*, these two buttresses might have been carefully taken down and rebuilt with the new solid bonders, as above mentioned, but otherwise retaining and re-using the old stone, with the only other change of correcting the mouldings.

3rd—*Damage to window tracery*.—This in east window followed from the above settlements, but merely presented the crushing of a very small stone or two in top of tracery and in the top stone of the arch over. Otherwise damage was limited to some little hacking of the sides of the mullions during some repair of the glass. The window may be said, beside these, to be in excellent condition, even to the crispness and projection of the cusps. The tracery has certain singular peculiarities, almost suggesting a tampering with the design at some period; but, if we are to believe the jointing, either the necessary insertion of a stone or two was effected in an astonishingly careful manner or the singularities existed from the very first. Repair then is, it will be seen, a very small item, though not actually necessary; yet, if the mullions are thought not good enough, they might be new. Otherwise but some five small stones of tracery and arch (together) are required. Of the side windows some small repairs of a similar description are desirable; but anything like re-working the whole, or even any considerable part, is perfectly unnecessary. It should here be noted as being by no means unlikely that similar windows to those existing in the east and west bays did exist formerly in the centre one. Of these traces may possibly turn up when the wall-plaster is removed. The most reasonable innovation (if innovation is required) would be to re-introduce them here, especially as otherwise parts of the outer face of both walls of this centre bay require rebuilding, as also a patch to west of that window on south side of east bay.

4th—*Roof timbers decayed.*—This springs entirely from want of care in repairing the lead covering. It has most seriously affected the principal second from east wall at the junctions of the ends of the purlins with it on south side of roof. Through similar defects the small square rafters are also decayed, so that the renewal of two-thirds to three-fourths of them are required.



The wall plates appear to have escaped, on the whole, much better than under the circumstances I should have been led to suspect, it being questionable if indeed more than three new lengths (of bay, one side) may be of necessity required. Of the tie beams, three would pass with slight repairs, but of a fourth (the second from last) it would require to be spliced with practically about one-half new oak, moulded, and properly bolted to the old half. There would, however, be a possibility of re-using here the present westernmost beam, provided that that one was done away with. It would be desirable to screw up the present roof about one-third or so higher, for which there is ample space within the battlemented parapet without interference or difficulty with gutters or sight-line, thus enabling the tops of east window and chancel arch to be perfectly seen. The only replacement required at west wall would be three small stone corbels to support the ends of ridge and purlins (or an iron shoe for ridge instead of the stone. Of the purlins, with the addition of iron straps on the back of the present, all might be repaired; or, otherwise, two new ones would perhaps be required at most. Should the roof be screwed up to the level necessary to rise above apex of window and arch, before the space is built up advantage should be taken to well tar [or *pitch* rather with *Swedish pitch*] the backs and bottoms of the old wall plates and any new ones used. The old stone corbels would require to be taken out and refixed at the slightly higher level, when the foot or so of additional wall space in height would be also built up. No difficulty would be found in reconstructing the gutters, which should discharge at each of the four angles, thus having one drip in each length, which would be much safer for the lead.

5th—*Repair of stone parapets and pinnacles.*—This would consist in part of “repairing” lost pinnacles, to a proper design, in parts above battlement, where lost; and an “innovation” in “restoring” certain which have been “made new,” but not like the originals, also adding a cross on east gable in place of one lost; some stones of battlements will require to be renewed, and a few require to be simply reset in cement. Of the string below about one-third requires to be renewed, a necessity seemingly called for: rather from wanton destruction, than actual decay. The walls of the chancel appear to have been repointed lately in parts that would require to be looked over and corrected. If the angle buttresses were rebuilt, it is a question whether in the lower stage they might not be better given 3in. more projection, and perhaps 1½in. in upper stage. If, however, the underpinning is properly and thoroughly done, though the walls are not quite upright, not the slightest cause for any doubt about the stability of the structure would exist.

With the above simple works, the continuance of the old building for at least the next three or four centuries would be rendered beyond doubt, and a most interesting specimen of the architectural glories of old England and old Derbyshire handed safely on to future generations.

I beg to remain,

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

JAS. THOS. IRVINE.

To the Rev. J. C. Cox.

Mr. Cox's letter appeared in the local papers, and a copy was sent to the Vicar of Hope by Mr. Cox himself.

Mr. Cox received this reply from Mr. Buckston—

Hope, Sheffield,

June 20th, 1881.

DEAR SIR,

I am obliged by your sending a copy of your letter addressed to the D. Arch. Society, the more so, since it con-

tains some inaccurate statements; not that I should have troubled to write to the newspapers to contradict them had they been published.

The Chancel was carefully inspected by the Bishop of Lichfield on the morning of June 16th. I leave the questions as to whether:—

1st. "The roof might have safely remained untouched for another quarter of a century at least;"

2nd. "The walls of this Chancel would have remained for many a generation;"

with his Lordship. He is an unprejudiced person, and, since the Bishop, through his Chancellor, granted the Faculty, perhaps it might be courteous to show the Bishop your letter.

Now, I come to some statements in your letter which are so wholly without foundation, that I cannot imagine whence your authority comes for making them; you speak of your Society having secured three things, briefly:—

1. That the high-pitched roof is to be abandoned.
2. English oak to be used.
3. The sedilia are not to be reduced to one level.

Allow me to inform you that your Society's recommendations had nothing whatever to do with these changes; the moment the reports of Messrs. Robinson and St. John Hope, and of Mr. Scott appeared in the newspapers, they ceased to have any weight whatever with the Building Committee.

You speak of the position of the present windows being retained, and also the priest's door; it is more than probable this may be done, but, I think it only right you should know your letter has had no influence. I am compelled to make this remark after what you say about your Society having caused other changes in the plans.

I note what you say about the inscribed tombstones in the Chancel; the object of such a remark in a document about to be published is self-evident; had you troubled to enquire from the Builder, you would have found his instructions strict and positive as to their careful preservation; but since the fact is true, pray publish it, if you think it will help your case.

Pardon my asking one question—as Vicar of Hope, I am to some extent responsible for the safety of the choir who sat in the Chancel. Is it not my duty to be guided rather by the professional opinion of an Architect of 40 years' experience, and well known for his *practical* knowledge, than by the opinion of a few gentlemen who come to Hope for an hour or two, and rush into print?

If by "any one's feelings" you allude to mine, pray do not consider them; my only "feelings" have been those of surprise, that gentlemen, not one of whom most probably would have given £50 to prevent the Chancel becoming a heap of ruins, should put themselves to such fruitless trouble as writing letters to the papers; the Dean and Chapter in 1870, refused, not £50, but 50/-, for the repair of the East Window.

Yours truly,

The Rev. J. C. Cox.

HENRY BUCKSTON.

On the 1st of July, I received the following from Mr. Buckston—

Vicarage, Hope, Sheffield,

July 1st, 1881.

DEAR SIR,

Mr. J. Charles Cox sent me a MSS. copy of a letter addressed to the D. A. and N. H. S. This letter has appeared in the Sheffield and Rotherham newspaper. I enclose a copy of my letter to Mr. Cox, with a request to you that if his letter be entered on the Minutes of your Society, my reply may appear also. It would be an evil thing for your Society, if its members were to imagine that writing violent one-sided letters to the newspapers could produce any effect on the minds of practical men.

Yours truly,

HENRY BUCKSTON.

Arthur Cox, Esq., Hon. Sec., D. A. and N. H. S.

Rev. J. Charles Cox wishes it to be stated that part of Mr. Buckston's letter refers to a private note of his, of which he did not keep a copy. Mr. Cox considered that Mr. Irvine's

exhaustive report so fully established all his remarks, that he did not think it worth while to make any further reply to Mr. Buckston.

No further correspondence took place ; the demolition and rebuilding were proceeded with, and we heard no more about Hope for some months, except one interesting fact—viz., the discovery, under the foundations of the walls, of two incised sepulchral slabs. These were promptly photographed by Mr. J. D. Leader, F.S.A., and appear in another part of the Society's journal.

As to the final results, I have received a letter from one of our members in the north of the county, containing this information—"I gather," says my correspondent, "that the restoration has been done in a much more satisfactory manner than is usually the case ; and this I believe to be mainly owing to the vigorous efforts of our Society and the gentlemen who assisted it. The tracery of the windows has been exactly copied, and the sedilia have been put back in their proper place. A good oak roof has been put over the Chancel. It is higher than the old one, which came below the Chancel arch. I could not learn that the inscribed monuments and brasses have been preserved, though I hope and believe that they have. Generally, I may say, from the report given me, that where the old features of the Chancel have been faithfully copied, the restoration is good. The controversy which arose respecting this church was very wide-spread, and I think the efforts made have been crowned with a real success, notwithstanding the fact that the main point was not gained. I hope our Society will be successful in inducing the clergy and others to pay a greater regard to the venerable and valuable relics entrusted to their care, instead of imitating, as too many do, the moth which corrupts."

With this, ends my present acquaintance with the condition of affairs at Hope. I can most fully endorse the hope expressed in the last quotation I have given. Surely what has occurred at Hope proves, if proof were wanting, that a society like ours was very much needed in Derbyshire.