

Review.

“THE ENGLISH PARISH CHURCH,”¹ by J. Charles Cox, LL.D., F.S.A., author of *English Church Furniture*, *Churches of Derbyshire*, *How to Write the History of a Parish*, etc.

By the REV. R. L. FARMER.

No individual writer has aroused and fostered a real love of parish churches, and an intelligent intimacy with their history and characteristics, to anything like the extent which has been inspired by the learned author of this book. It is not only his standard volumes on the Churches of Derbyshire which have earned for Dr. Cox the lasting gratitude of this particular county, but his wide study and able pen have laid the whole nation under a debt of obligation to his life-long researches.

This latest volume on the English Parish Church is one which only his full knowledge and unwearied observation could have supplied. So far as we know, this book is in some directions unique. It is not a mere exposition of various styles and details of ecclesiastical architecture, but deals solely with actual parish churches apart from the larger abbey churches and cathedrals, tracing their growth from the simple structures which met the immediate needs of the earliest worshippers, and marking the gradual changes and developments arising from the demands of successive ages, and the devotional attitude of the times.

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Dr. Cox claims that "England stands first in all Christendom in the number and antiquity of her churches," and lays stress upon their pleasing diversity and contrasts. "There is no monotonous reiteration."

Some exceedingly interesting pages will be found on the influence—oftentimes unconsciously exerted upon the builders—of the surrounding landscape. "The finest churches," he remarks, "are usually in districts where the neighbourhood is monotonous or flat," as in Norfolk, Suffolk, and the fens of Lincolnshire.

The quiet glens and wooded coombs have their more appropriate but charming little edifices. "The overpowering size and occasional sublimity of the mountains of Lakeland have had the broad result of dwarfing much of the efforts of church builders in Cumberland and Westmoreland."

The plan of the parish church is very comprehensively studied in the second chapter, with numerous drawings carefully given to the same scale, and so shaded that the period of building can be easily discerned.

An especial feature of the book is an exhaustive chapter on the materials used in construction—the stone, flint, brick, mortar, plaster, and timber, as well as the lead and iron, all come under the observant eye of Dr. Cox, and help to tell the story of the parish church.

The last chapter, on "What to Note in an old Parish Church," is, it is needless to add, full of instruction.

The book is profusely illustrated by delightful drawings and clear photographs. Some three hundred of these add to the attractiveness of the letterpress.