

Sussex Archæological Society.

MURAL PAINTINGS IN SUSSEX CHURCHES.

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AT the present day, when the coloured decoration seen in the interiors of our churches is mostly confined to a few stained-glass windows, an embroidered altar frontal, and some encaustic tiles, it is difficult to realize how different the appearance of ecclesiastical buildings must have been in the Middle Ages; then the walls were covered with paintings and richly-wrought hangings, whilst across the churches were screens bright with gold and colours, and the roofs, pulpits and other fittings, together with the monuments of the dead, were equally adorned with polychrome. By many people such colouring is now looked upon with disfavour, and yet the teaching of antiquity is entirely against such a view, as every nation has possessed a love of bright decorative colour nearly up to the present time. The walls of the Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, Etruscan and Roman buildings all show successively and conclusively that humanity delights not only in subdued tints, but in bright glowing colour. It need hardly be said that our English forefathers did not differ from older nations in this respect, and it is only from a comparatively recent date that civilized men have professed a morbid dislike of direct colour.

From the time when Christianity first became free and unpersecuted the use of polychrome in decorating the walls of churches has been employed. In Italy this at first took the form of Mosaic ornamentation, and of

which many remarkable examples exist; but however beautiful in itself such work may have been, it was found to be too expensive and difficult of execution for use among the northern nations, when they became converted to the Christian faith, and consequently distemper painting took the place with them of the more costly Mosaics.

Besides the beauty which paintings confer on the interiors of churches, it was seen from the first that pictorial representations could be made powerful instruments in teaching the doctrines of the Church to the poor and unlettered, and it is not an exaggeration to say that in such mediæval works of art there is hardly to be found a detail which is not an embodiment of some theological opinion of the Fathers, or of a commonly received belief or legend. The Venerable Bede shows us how pictures were used in his day to exhibit the relationship between the Old and New Dispensations, as a reference to his works will inform us, as do those of other writers of the same period.¹

In the Italian basilica the chief Mosaic was in the apse behind the altar, or else upon the arch separating the sanctuary from the body of the edifice, and the usual subject was that of our Lord in glory, surrounded by the Apostles. In England the Saxon churches were probably similarly ornamented, and, from what Bede says, a great number of the pictures employed must have been panel paintings executed in Italy, as he records in two places the importation from thence of representations of the "Mother of God," the twelve Apostles, subjects from the "Apocalypse of blessed John," with others, types and anti-types connected with our Lord. No Saxon sacred paintings exist, though polychrome has been found on stonework presumably of that date, but their characteristics may be gleaned from the pages of the "Benedictional of St. Ethelwold," and similar works of the period, for the illuminators of MSS. and the painters of church walls were in all probability

¹ See "Bede's Life of St. Benedict Biscop," pp. 368, and 374-376 in edition of his Complete Works by Dr. Giles, 1843.

the same artists then, as they often were in subsequent times. After the Conquest, and till the middle of the 16th century, we can form a fairly correct idea of the scheme of iconography which ruled the ornamentation of a church. Our Lord, and His Apostles, the saints, their lives and miracles, decorated the walls in two tiers of subjects in early work, as at West Chiltington, Hardham, and Westmeston, an arrangement pursued long before in Assyrian and Etruscan interiors.² Both sides of the chancel arches were painted, as at Hardham and Preston; on the west faces of those at Chiltington and Westmeston was our Lord in glory, whilst at Plumpton angels upheld His cross in the same position. Later on the space above the entrance to the chancel was almost invariably devoted to the Doom or Last Judgment, and of which there were numerous examples in Sussex. The splays or sides of the windows were covered with masonry patterns as at Hardham, or with scroll work, and later on with full-length effigies of saints, as at Battle and Stedham, in the latter instance surmounted by canopy work. The under sides or soffites of the nave arches had reticulated (or lozenge-shaped) panels, or chevrons, both of which may be seen at Chiltington, or an elegantly floriated scroll trailed from springing to apex, as at Beddingham. Similar devices adorned the pillars, both in early and later work, as on the columns of 3rd Pointed work at Rotherfield. Spaces of wall not occupied by figure designs were ornamented with masonry patterns forming oblongs, which were often in decorated work, filled in with roses, or elegant foliage; there were excellent examples of this at Slindon, St. Olave Chichester, and Horsham, where this diaper was used as a background to figure subjects with good effect. At Wivelsfield, the recess forming a reredos above the chantry altar had a diamond-shaped composition in

² At West Chiltington the subjects are enclosed in very elegant trefoil-headed arches in two ranges, one over the other, but not coinciding. At Hardham each picture appears to have been divided from the next, by architectural work—towers, buildings, and pinnacles. In the Perpendicular designs at Battle each subject was surrounded by a slightly ornamental border of almost classic character.

colour. At St. Olave Chichester, the east wall had a series of small figures in very elegant little arches above the high altar.³

Our ancestors were not always contented with the paintings on their church walls, and did not hesitate to replace them by fresh subjects; thus at Chiltington we find two sets of designs, one over the other, and in some cases elsewhere as many as five different layers have been discovered. That the artists of most of the early pictures were Englishmen there can be no reasonable doubt, and Matthew of Paris expresses great admiration of the works of one of them, called Walter of Colchester, who was employed to embellish the walls of St. Alban's Abbey Church. In the 16th Century, however, we find the Fleming Bernardi executing extensive productions of his brush at Chichester Cathedral, and at other places in Sussex.

Sometimes a church was indebted to the liberality of private individuals for the cost of the paintings, and on other occasions the parishioners combined to pay for them, as is indicated by an entry in the churchwardens' accounts at Cowfold, which runs as follows:—"rec^d for payntyng of the Cherch of devotion de parocha, iij^s viij." ⁴ Bequests for the same purpose were not unknown; thus, William Haben, of Rogate, in his will, dated Dec. 14th, 1520, says:—"I give to the painting of S. Bartholomew, 12^d." ⁵ the saint here mentioned being the patron of his parish church; and, in 1534, John Stanmer, of Heene, bequeathed "to S. Botolp in Hyne for the painting 12^d." ⁶

The South Kensington "List of Buildings having Mural Decorations," mentions the names of sixty-nine places in Sussex where painted work has been discovered, and, this compilation, though an exhaustive one, still omits a few examples.⁷ Some churches appear to have

³ An attempt at constructional polychrome is to be found at Aldingbourne, where the voussours of the north transept arch are alternately of a grey-green coloured stone and chalk, producing a very pleasing effect.

⁴ "S. A. C.," Vol. II., p. 319.

⁵ "S. A. C.," Vol. XII., p. 76.

⁶ "S. A. C.," Vol. XII., p. 110.

⁷ Ex. gra., Angmering, Beddingham, Burton, and Nuthurst.

been entirely covered with pictures, as at Binstead, Hardham, and West Chiltington, and there was a noble series of large compositions on the walls at Horsham. Many antiquaries consider that the events presented to us in mediæval paintings were but seldom derived from the Bible; but a glance at the index given in the above-mentioned work does not convey this impression, at least as regards the New Testament, and in Sussex there were a large number of Scriptural subjects delineated, though I can find but one from the Old Testament—the temptation of Adam and Eve—at Hardham.

In the following pages it is proposed to treat, in the first place, of the scenes—real or allegorical—derived from the sacred writings, and the figures of the angels, apostles, and holy persons mentioned therein; next, of mediæval saints and legends; and, finally, of symbolical representations.

In the Middle Ages the earlier events in our Lord's life occur but seldom in Christian iconography, the majority of the designs being connected with the Passion, and Christ's future appearance at the general judgment of mankind. The Nativity occurred at West Chiltington, Hardham, and Preston, and the Adoration of the Magi, at Chiltington, Portslade, Preston, and Westmeston; the Flight into Egypt, at Plumpton; and, I think, the Baptism of our Saviour was on the walls at Hardham, from a fragment which remains on the chancel arch. The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem is said to have been at Chiltington, and there were at least four representations of the Last Supper, at Chiltington, Horsham, Preston, and Slaugham, a large number out of a total of sixteen recorded as having existed throughout England.⁸ Our Lord Scourged was at Slaugham, and Westmeston, and Surrounded and Mocked by the Jews at Horsham, where the Carrying of the Cross was also seen. St. Peter cutting off the ear of Malchus occurred at Westmeston. The Crucifixion, though the

⁸ This subject, though seldom found in churches, occurs often in the refectories of monasteries; it was so placed at St. Martin's Priory, Dover, and the celebrated "Last Supper" of Leonardo da Vinci was painted in a monastic dining-hall.

crowning event in the Passion, has not been so often met with on church walls as might have been expected, doubtless from the presence of the large representation of it over the chancel screen found in every church. It was on the east wall at Kirdford ("S. K. List," p. 151), the south side of the nave at Chiltington, and on the west face of the jamb of the chancel arch at Westmeston, where it served, as in many other cases, as a substitute for an altar cross. Lastly, there was an extremely curious and unique Crucifixion at Wisborough Green, in the same position as the last-named example, and which I am pleased to say still exists. A series of six scenes, apparently from the Passion, were painted near the chancel arch at Battle.⁹ The Deposition was at Westmeston, and perhaps the Entombment was intended at Binstead; Chiltington and Hardham had the Resurrection, and the *Noli me tangere*, together with the incredulity of St. Thomas, may still be seen at Preston. Christ in Majesty was painted at Binstead, Chiltington, and Wisborough Green. Our Lord between the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul was figured in a remarkable design at Westmeston, an almost unique composition, though probably there was another example at Horsham. Christ as Judge at the Doom or Last Judgment was over the chancel arches at Alfriston, Angmering, Hastings (All Saints), Nuthurst, Patcham, Plumpton, and Withyham; and at Portslade and Stedham, on the side walls.

Many of the above examples of our Lord and His history have been described and engraved in our Society's volumes, and will therefore call for little remark here. At Horsham the painting of the Last Supper has been so much "restored," that little of the original has been left; this showed a man serving before the table on bended knee, the tablecloth being looped up at intervals with roses. At the same church the Mocking of our Saviour, exhibited him as blindfold, standing amongst His enemies, one of whom was kneeling and presenting Him with a gigantic bull-rush

⁹ The will of John Cooper, of Slinfold, dated Feb. 9th, 1526, mentions a picture of the Rood in the church of that place ("S. A. C.," Vol. XII., p. 109).

for a sceptre, a feature frequently met with in the works of Italian painters.

In early work we find our Redeemer in glory, or His emblem the Lamb, placed above the chancel arch, and it is interesting to trace how this conception gradually developed into the Doom or Judgment.¹⁰ At Westmeston the Holy Lamb appeared in a 12th Century painting, the symbol being enclosed within a quatrefoil upheld by two angels with averted faces, as though unable to bear the radiance of the Divine glory. At Plumpton the Agnus Dei was on the under surface of the arch, whilst above the opening was probably our Lord in Judgment, flanked by angels, two of whom supported the Cross (which bore a strong resemblance in outline and ornamentation to one at Westmeston, and suggesting that the same artist executed both works), one angel had the name MICHAEL in large letters close to him, and under these figures was a band, below which was an angel displaying the "coat without seam" to the dead arising from their graves. In this conception, also of the 12th Century, we have the germ of the Doom of later times, and which we find complete in the more recent painting at Patcham, which is early in the next century in date; in this we have the subject with most of the accessories presented in similar compositions up to the middle of the 16th Century. Our Lord throned in majesty, with the globe beneath His feet displaying His five wounds; angels with trumpets summoning the dead to arise, others holding the instruments of the Passion, the Cross, the spear, the reed, &c.; whilst to the right of the Judge kneels His Mother pleading for mankind, the Apostles being seated behind as assistant judges. Below this is a band under which a company of souls is marching to take their places at God's right hand, and are being helped and encouraged by angelic spirits. Under these saved ones is another line, and below all the dead rising from their sepulchres. The sinister side of the design

¹⁰ At Maresfield "on each side of the chancel arch were two angels with expanded wings, the right arm of one and the left of the other being so extended to hold in their hands a chaplet of flowers just over the point. In their other hands were palm branches" ("S. A. C.," Vol. XIV., p. 143).

has unfortunately perished, but we may probably conjecture that the condemned were here shown hurried on to torment.

At Stedham was a 14th Century Doom on the south wall of the nave, and which from the engraving in the Society's Collections (Vol. IV.) must have been an artistic and elegant composition. Our Lord within a vesica is seated on a rainbow, lighted tapers are on either side, and at our Saviour's right hand is a group of angels and saints, beneath which is placed the city of Jerusalem, and lower still the dead arising, and the lost falling headlong into the burning lake of hell.

The churches of Angmering and All Saints', Hastings, had 15th Century Doooms over their chancel arches, and there was one of the same date at Portslade on the south wall of the nave; in the last Satan was seen with bat-like wings raised above his head. At Hastings our Lord seated on a rainbow was seen thorn-crowned, and in his right hand "apparently a drawn sword" and in "his left a lily."¹¹

There are some features frequently found in mediæval Doooms which do not seem to have been introduced in Sussex examples, such as the presence of St. John Baptist as a companion figure to the Blessed Virgin, St. Peter as the celestial doorkeeper, or St. Michael as the soul-weigher, nor are there any remains exhibiting the symbolical idea of hell as an open-mouthed monster, unless part of the Portslade design was intended for it.

Before dismissing this subject a few of the most prominent details common to many representations seem to call for some notice. In many the walls of a city are seen with towers within which are angels blowing trumpets,¹² this is generally supposed to be the heavenly city but with more probability is intended for the earthly Jerusalem, at which city many theologians held that our Lord would appear at the last day. This was the

¹¹ "S. A. C.," Vol. XXIII., p. 195. There was a Last Judgment in stained glass at Ticehurst.

¹² "Tuba mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum."—*Dies Iræ*.

opinion of Silvius, founded upon the text in Joel, "The Lord also shall roar out of Sion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem" (*Joel iii. 16*). The angel who frequently appears holding the Cross is usually intended for St. Michael, that honour being acceded to him as "prince of the celestial host."¹³ The exhibition of the Cross itself at the Doom is often referred to in the Breviary office for the feasts both of the Invention, and Exaltation of the Cross—

Hoc signum erit in cœlo, Alleluia,
Cum Dominus ad judicandum venerit, Alleluia,

being many times repeated in it. At Plumpton St. Michael probably appeared as summoning the dead to arise, as he was also credited with having to perform this office. The presence of angels bearing the various implements used in the Passion is also according to Patristic teaching, and the portraiture of our Lord with uplifted hands, and with His mantle arranged to exhibit the wounds in His side and feet, accords with the opinion of St. Thomas Aquinas, where he says "Cicatrices antem in corpore ejus apparebunt." Often the dead are seen without clothing, the just awaiting their investiture in celestial robes,—the condemned their banishment into hell garmentless; one of their punishments being "defaute of clothing." But, whether lost or saved, each soul if belonging to a pope, priest, monk, or monarch, retains respectively the tiara, tonsure or crown, not only to show its worldly status, but that each having been anointed with the sacred chrism continues that of an ecclesiastic or sovereign to all eternity. Hell is seen at Stedham as a lake, according to the verse "Salvasti me a descendentibus in lacum" (*Psalms xxix. 3, Vulgate*), and also the passage in Revelation "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone" (*ch. xx. 10*).¹⁴

¹³ In accordance with which the offertory in the Mass for the Dead in the Breviary prays that the souls of the departed, "Ne cadant in obscurum, sed signifer sanctus Michael representet eas in lucem sanctam."

¹⁴ Many features of a mediæval Doom have their counterparts in the paintings of Egyptian and Etruscan buildings; such as the assembly of judges, the soul weighing, and the contests between good and evil spirits. The weighing of good and evil is also a symbol used by the Greek poets, as, for example, Homer, and Æschylus.

The devil in the Portslade picture is said to have had bat-like wings, and he is so represented in all old work, to make these appendages look repulsive, and to distinguish them from those of the angels, who frequently have the feathers like those of the peacock, to impress us with a sense of their beauty. Dante thus alludes to Satan's pinions—

Two mighty wings enormous, as became
A bird so vast. Sails never such I saw,
Outstretch'd on the wide sea, no plumes had they,
But were in texture like a bat.

—“Hell,” canto XXXIV., trans. Carey.

The compositions formerly at Horsham and Westmeston representing the Saviour between His Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, were probably the most curious of all our Sussex church paintings (if those still at Wisborough Green are excepted), as the idea embodied by them belongs rather to primitive, than mediæval Christian art. At Westmeston, our Lord enthroned had St. Paul on His right hand, St. Peter on His left (at Horsham the relative positions were changed); He presented a volume to St. Paul and a key of large size to St. Peter, whilst over the group was a band inscribed

[LIB] RUM DAT PAULO XTUS CLAVES q(U)OQ(UE) PETRO.

Besides the extreme rarity of such a conception in mediæval work, these pictures were noteworthy from their strong resemblance to some early Christian delineations of this allegorical scene.¹⁵ In Heapy's beautiful work *The Likeness of Christ* he engraves some examples which he ascribes to a very early date, but all are more or less like our Sussex specimens; in two our Lord is seen enthroned, and the traditional likenesses of our Redeemer and the two Apostles are apparent in both the early and later works. St. Peter as a round-faced, rather unintellectual-looking man, with stubby beard, and, except in one instance, either bald or tonsured; St.

¹⁵ It is interesting to observe how these Apostles were almost invariably associated together in the Early and Middle Ages,—many of our churches supposed to be dedicated to St. Peter, are in reality in honour of St. Paul likewise. If St. Peter was venerated as “pastor ovium, Princeps Apostolorum,” St. Paul was equally so as “Prædicator veritatis et doctor gentium.”

Paul figured as a dark, thoughtful personage, with a sharp face and features, plentiful hair, and a long pointed beard.¹⁶

No doubt there were numerous representations of the Blessed Virgin in Sussex churches, but no record of any very striking ones appear to exist. At the Bishop's private chapel at Chichester one was found in 1829 and was a work of 12th Century execution, other examples were discovered at Amberley and Bosham, and in each she bore the Holy Child in her arms, as was almost invariably the case in English art.¹⁷ There has been a composition representing the Annunciation at Horsham, but I fear that it retains but little of the original details, it was of large size and placed above the tower arch, there were other examples of this scene at Amberley and West Chiltington. The Coronation of the Virgin formed the centre of some very elegant painted work of 14th Century date at St. Olave Chichester, and which seemed to have served as a reredos. The reason why so few traces of paintings of the Mother of our Lord have been recorded is probably due to the fact that she was so extensively honoured in other ways, such as by the dedication of chapels, altars, and images to her. She appears in the Doom as mediatrix, and I am inclined to think that she was represented in this character, in conjunction with St. Michael at Lindfield, though the effigy there has hitherto been ascribed to St. Margaret, and some reasons for the former opinion will be found further on.

Figures of the Apostles appear to have been somewhat numerous; they were probably represented alternately with female saints at St. Olave Chichester, one figure having had St. Peter's emblem of the key. The

¹⁶ See Heapy, "Likeness of Christ," pp. 7, 24, 43 and for Apostles' likenesses, pp. 27, 31. That the traditionary likenesses of the Apostles Peter and Paul were well known to the Anglo-Saxon Church, may be gathered from a passage in Bede, where he describes a vision beheld by a lad, who when questioned concerning it, replied, respecting the persons he had seen in it, "Their habit was noble and their countenances most pleasant. One of them indeed was shorn like a clerk; the other had a long beard and they said that one was called Peter, and the other Paul" (Bede, "Ecclesiastical History," Book IV., ch. 14, 17, p. 14).

¹⁷ The only instance I have met with to the contrary is on the seal of St. Neot's Abbey, Hunts, of 13th Century date.

Apostolic College was also seen at West Chiltington and Hardham, The Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew, Mr. Turner conjectures to have been at Maresfield, and the Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch was on the north wall of the same church.¹⁸ St. James, as the patron of pilgrims, occurs in a very curious picture at Wisborough Green, and the Beheading of St. John Baptist was portrayed at All Saints', Hastings.

Three figures at Stedham may have represented the three Maries, who also appeared at West Chiltington. St. Anne was at Harting, and the *Noli me tangere* at Preston, as before alluded to.

Representations of the Angelic Host were frequent, and they filled in the spandrils over the arched panels painted at Chiltington. Angels were present also in numerous scenes, such as the Doom, &c. At Arundel one upholds the mantle of a large half-destroyed figure, probably of a female saint, and at Hardham and Slaugham angelic figures bore away souls to bliss. St. Michael in mediæval paintings appears principally in two characters, as the conqueror of Satan and as the weigher of souls, and sometimes in both capacities, as at Lindfield, where he was so represented. In this example he was seen balance in hand treading upon the seven-headed beast of the Apocalypse, whose heads were shown cut off from the body; the out-spread peacock-feathered wings of the archangel rose high over his head, whilst his body was clad in an apparelled albe, whose surface was powdered with the initial M; with his *left* hand he brandished a tremendous sword, and held a large pair of scales with the right. In one bowl of the balance was a demon, and another outside trying to depress it, the opposite scale, however, being lowest, and close to a small figure crouching beside the skirts of a majestic and crowned female. This queenly personage had an ermine bordered dress enveloped in an ample mantle, her hair flowed in long tresses over her shoulders, whilst a nimbus encircled her head, and under her feet were stars. Such was the picture at Lindfield, as it is shown

¹⁸ "S. A. C.," Vol. XIV., p. 143, and "S. K. List," p. 170.

in an engraving in the "S. A. C.," Vol. II., p. 128, and it appears to me clearly that St. Mary, and not St. Margaret, was the saint represented.¹⁹ St. Michael and the usual green dragon are seen in combat over the south entrance to Withyham Church, which is dedicated to him.

Foremost among representations of the saints in pictorial art stood those of St. Christopher, the "South Kensington List" mentioning 180 examples, but of these only four occurred on the walls of Sussex churches; those at South Bersted, West Chilmington, Stedham, and Westmeston. (Since writing the above a fifth example of St. Christopher, of great interest, has been discovered at West Grinstead, and will be found described in the present volume under West Grinstead.) St. Christopher and St. George were often associated together in the art of the Middle Ages; their effigies may be seen side by side at Brundal, Norfolk, and Fritton, Suffolk, and in Sussex we had an example of this companionship at Stedham, where St. Christopher occupied his usual position on the north wall, whilst immediately opposite him was the patron saint of England.²⁰

The legend of St. George, a worthy probably ranking next to the Christ-bearing saint in popularity occurred at Mid-Lavant, Stedham, and Westfield, and perhaps also at Hardham, though I consider that the last example was merely intended to be an allegorical picture of the Christian warrior triumphing over his spiritual enemies;

¹⁹ At Kempley, Glos., on the splay of a window, was "an archangel weighing a Soul, the B. Virgin interceding;" at Lathbury, Bucks, "St. Michael weighing souls and the Virgin" on the north wall of the nave ("S. K. List," pp. 141, 155). In a paper, "Mural and other Paintings, &c." ("Arch. Journ.," XLV., p. 410), I have followed the usual description of the Lindfield painting, not having then seen the engraving in the "S. A. C." volume.

²⁰ The picture at Stedham, and the legend of St. Christopher are fully described in "S. A. C.," Vol. IV., pp. 13-17. The story of the miraculous Christ-bearing is generally considered an elegant allegory, and his festival is commemorated in the Breviary, by a simple collect only, in which no mention is made of it; but in an early 16th Century printed "Horæ, B.V.M.," there is a picture of the saints' martyrdom, with a prayer respecting the miracle, and the following antiphon:—

"Christofori sancti faciem quicumque tuctur.
Illo nempe die nullo langore tenetur,
Christoforum videas postea tutus eas."

Similar verses were often inscribed beneath the wall paintings of this popular saint.

a subject formerly at Hessett, Suffolk, and Lanivet, Cornwall. When St. George appeared in a wall painting he was generally on horseback, as at Westfield, and Stedham, in the latter case being mounted on a blue steed, and encountering a vividly red dragon. The history of this saint, like that of St. Christopher, is generally considered allegorical, and no mention is made of it in any part of the service for his feast, in either the Roman Breviary or Missal. Considering his general popularity, shown in the dedication of about 170 of our churches in his honour, and the placing of England under his patronage, it is perhaps somewhat remarkable that so few paintings of this saint have been noticed on the walls of our churches.

To the palace of the Archbishops of Canterbury at West Tarring, St. Thomas-a-Becket is said to have paid frequent visits, and a picture of his martyrdom is painted on the walls of Preston Church, and as the saint must have been well known in Sussex, there were probably many other examples of which no record is left.²¹

A scene from the life of a still more celebrated St. Thomas is said to have been at South Bersted, where St. Thomas Aquinas was represented "disputing" with the doctors of the Church ("S. A. C.," Vol. XXXII., p. 232), and its date was early in the 16th Century.²²

St. Lawrence, the patron of Rotherfield Church, was there portrayed, and also at Harting. Kirdford rejoiced in a representation of St. Nicholas "restoring to life two children who had been salted down in a tub," a very favourite miracle in pictures of this saint, but to which, with much wisdom, no allusion is made in the lessons for his feast in the Breviary, though the collect for that occasion states him to have been "decorated with innumerable miracles." The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian was at Preston, and of St. Vincent at Westmeston.

Among female saints (after St. Mary) St. Catharine enjoyed the greatest popularity, and she was pictured at

²¹ The Preston paintings are engraved and described in the "Archæologia," Vol. XXIII., p. 311.

²² This was a favourite subject with the Italian painters. See "Jameson's Legends of the Monastic Orders," pp. 377-379.

Alfriston, Kirdford, and Preston. She was the "Minerva of Christianity,"²³ and was equally honoured in the Greek and Latin communions. St. Margaret, almost as highly renowned, appeared on the walls at Binsted and Preston. As a patroness of churches, she had no less than 236 named in her honour. Of St. Helen there is a solitary example recorded as having been at Harting, and St. Ursula may have been at Stedham, as the absence of her emblem—the arrow—is not unknown in other examples, but if the "figures on each side of her appear to be males rather than females," as reported at the time of the discovery of the painting, then probably St. Mary, as the "Queen of All Saints" was intended, as such representations are occasionally met with.

Saintly figures, more or less numerous, but whose designations, or nomenclature, could not be fixed upon, were at Eastergate, West Chiltington, Nuthurst, and Steyning, and at Burton there is a very remarkable fragment still discernible on the east splay of a window in the north wall of the nave. It shows a female figure, head downwards, and crucified by being tied to a saltire cross ragulée. The effigy is clearly that of a female, with a large mass of deep red hair hanging from the head, which is that of a round-faced young woman. No mention of this curious design is made in the "South Kensington List," or have I seen it noticed elsewhere, nor can I find any saint whose martyrdom was by this singular method of crucifixion.²⁴

Our ancestors were fond of allegorical and emblematical designs, and nearly every church had the virtues and vices, acts of mercy, or similar subjects painted on the walls or in the windows. Among these was a symbolical figure of the Christian Warrior Triumphant, one of which is to be seen at Hardham, though fast crumbling away. It is of 12th Century date and exhibits a nimbed, youthful combatant, clad in a yellow tunic, mounted on horseback and wielding a spear in his right

²³ "Barr. Anglican Calendar," p. 142, in the Breviary, she is said to have joined "the study of liberal arts with ardent faith."

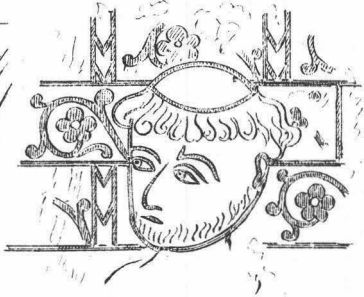
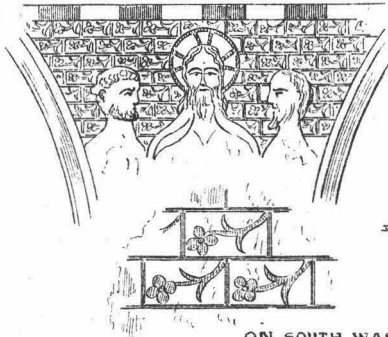
²⁴ St. Wilgefort is represented on a screen at Worstead, Norfolk, tied to an ordinary cross (see "Reliquary," Vol. XXXVI., p. 13).

hand, and to which a banner is attached, having four "tails," exactly as the pennons shown on seals of the time of Henry I. or Stephen. This composition was on the north wall of the nave whilst on the south was a similarly sized picture of the Death of the Righteous, or Lazarus taken to the bosom of Abraham. Here the background is mostly yellow with waved lines to represent the clouds of heaven, and a large nude sex-less figure is being borne upwards by two angels, who sustain it beneath the arm-pits with their hands enveloped in a mantle which passes behind the soul.²⁵ There were two more celestial figures at the feet of the saved one, but these have nearly perished; the soul is without a nimbus, but each angelic figure has one. The details are very Byzantine in character, and a text ran above the whole, of which the words "PAUPER OBIT" alone remain. At the sides are architectural details, perhaps emblematical of the heavenly Jerusalem. A very similar painting appears to have been also at Slaugham. The parable of Dives and Lazarus was a favourite in the Middle Ages, and frequently adorned not only ecclesiastical buildings, but secular ones, and Henry III. had it painted with much appropriateness at the end of one of his halls.

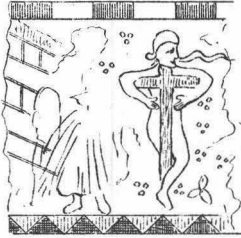
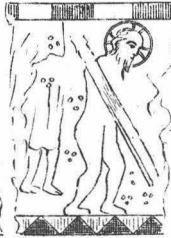
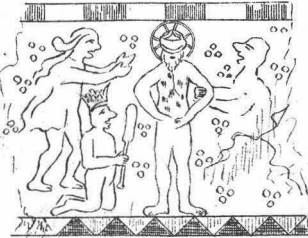
Another symbolical representation seems to have been at Kirdford, where there was "a King exhorted to good by a counsellor on one side and to evil by a demon on the other" ("Lower's Hist. Sussex," Vol. I., p. 8). At Battle were two panels which probably set forth the

²⁵ In Christian art all precious or sacred objects were held in cloths when presented to divine or kingly personages. In some early mosaics the three Magi thus bear their gifts to Christ, and the usage is illustrated by a passage in Bede, which relates of St. Ethelburga that before her death, a nun named Folgath had a vision of it. "This person," says the chronicler, "going out of her chamber one night just at the first dawn of day, plainly saw as it were, a human body which was brighter than the sun, wrapped in a sheet and lifted up on high" ("Eccles. Hist.," Bk. IV., Ca. 9).

In Mediæval art the soul is generally of small size, but is nearly as large as the angels who carry it at Hardham, and this seems also to have been the case at Slaugham. The idea of a soul as a small human figure boasts a high antiquity. Perry, describing Greek sculpture of the 5th Century B.C., mentions a tomb on which winged figures with egg-shaped bodies, "each bearing a small doll-like figure in its arms," were represented, and symbolize "no doubt, the messengers of death in the act of bearing away the deceased" (Perry, "Greek and Roman Sculpture," p. 114).



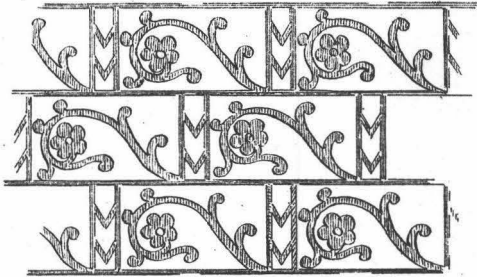
ON SOUTH WALL.



ON NORTH WALL.

MURAL PAINTINGS
 formerly at
HORSHAM CHURCH.

from sketches by the late
M^r THO^s HONEYWOOD.



ON SOUTH WALL.

J Lewis Andre, F.S.A. Del.

triumph of wickedness over virtue, and of good over evil. In the dexter composition was a person kneeling and seized by a demon, whilst in the sinister compartment was a figure beside a prostrate fiend. The Seven Acts of Mercy are at Arundel, where they are said to have been restored; one of these acts—the Burial of the Dead—was found also at Mid-Lavant, where “the priest vested in an albe touches with the processional cross the corpse wrapped in a shroud marked upon the heart with a large cross patée.”²⁶ Perhaps the figure of a bier, found at Keymer, may have formed part of a similar series. Emblematical representations of the administrations of the Seven Sacraments are reported to have been at Mid-Lavant.²⁷ These are not often found as wall paintings, but are extremely numerous as sculptures on the 3rd Pointed bowls of East-Anglian fonts, where they are excellent examples of ecclesiastical ceremonies.

Representations of the Seven Deadly Sins were common in our churches, and were generally grouped about a tree, or within a wheel, but at other times they cluster round a female figure, as at Raunds, Northants, and as was the case at Wisborough Green, where the celebrated authority on our mural paintings, Mr. Waller, informs us was “a large nude female figure with a series of winged demons or dragons coming from the different parts of the body in which sin is supposed to reside or be affected by.”²⁸ At Arundel, over the north doorway, the devil was depicted creating the mortal sins, and monsters swallowing each vice in its jaws.

There was a favourite legend, often depicted on church walls, in the 15th Century; this was the story of “The Three Living and the Three Dead,” and of it there was a picture at Battle, and another still remains at Charlwood, in Surrey, but close to the Sussex border. The three kings, it was related, were out hunting together, and were startled by the appearance of three hideous spectres or skeletons, who addressed them on the vanity

²⁶ “Archæological Journal,” Vol. III., p. 265. There is a good series of the Corporal Works of Mercy at Wickhampton, Norfolk.

²⁷ “Arch. Journ.,” Vol. III., p. 265. ²⁸ “Arch. Journ.,” Vol. XXXIV., p. 223.

of earthly pomp and glory, to their great discomfiture. The subject is met with abroad as well as in England, and there are examples in Ireland and the Channel Islands. It formed part of the large fresco of Orcagua in the Campo Santo at Pisa. The most perfect one with which I am acquainted is at Belton, in Suffolk, though fast crumbling away. The kings are generally on horseback, richly dressed, and with their attendants and hunting dogs. The spectres are in some cases crowned, and stand boldly confronting the living monarchs, but in Orcagua's work they are simply three skeletons in open coffins. Occasionally a queen is one of the three royal personages, as at Battle, where the moral saying of Lucan "*Mors sceptrā ligonibus equat*" was inscribed above the spectres.²⁹ The date of the painting is supposed to be of the 14th Century, the story itself is of the 13th.

The Signs of the Zodiac enter frequently into mediæval art, and especially that of early date; they occur in nearly every possible way, on fonts, doorways, and pavements, and we also find them painted upon church walls, as at Copford in Essex, but the only Sussex example I have found records of appears to have been on the soffit of the chancel arch at Westminster.³⁰ The use of these emblems in decorative work is extremely ancient and they were embroidered on the veils of the temples of Babylon and Egypt.

Among mural paintings of our churches there remain to be noticed the consecration crosses which are so frequently to be met with, generally within the walls, but occasionally on the exteriors of ecclesiastical buildings. They are usually quite plain crosses of the patée form, inscribed in plain circles, but much more elaborate examples are sometimes found, as at Darenth,

²⁹ "Arch. Journ.," Vol. XXI., p. 218. The "South Kensington List" furnishes twenty-two English examples of the "Trois Vifs."

³⁰ See "S. A. C.," XVI., p. 3. In mediæval times it was believed that each sign influenced the month connected with it, as Gowers says—

"The twelve monthes of the yere
Attitled under the powere
Of these twelve signs stonde."—Conf. Amantis, Bk. VII.

Kent, and Worstead, Norfolk, and at Clymping there is said to have been "a large and elegant specimen of late 12th Century date." The churches of Amberley, Arundel, Chichester (St. Olave), Pevensey, Poling, Slindon, and Treyford, have each exhibited traces of consecration crosses on their walls, and more or less numerous in each edifice.³¹

After the Reformation texts were ordered to be painted over all pictures, and there is an interesting entry on this subject in the churchwardens' accounts of All Saints', Hastings, under the date 1578, when there was an "expenditure of 2^s. 6^d. by payment to the Somner for carrying of a letter to Mr. Comyssary, the which Mr. Tydd made for that the Wardens should not go to Shorham upon the servyng of a Cytacyon that our Church walls are not decked with the Scripture."³² Texts written in consequence of the injunctions of the authorities appeared on the walls at Amberley, Barcombe, Burton, Bury, Eastergate, and other Sussex churches, sometimes within elaborate "Classical" scroll and arabesque work, a feature to be seen in connection with the paintings of the Royal Arms which were frequent during the 17th and 18th centuries. These latter were occasionally placed over the chancel arch, but occur in other positions; there was one on the north wall at Henfield dated 1694, and another is still on the south side of the nave at Burton, it is dated 1636, and bears the motto *Christo auspice regno*, a legend often seen on the coinage of Charles I.

The walls of most of our old churches having been replastered during the restorations which have been so universal during the last forty years, it is not likely that many fresh additions will be made to the list of scanty remains now left us, and by which alone we can judge of the character of the wall decorations of our ancient ecclesiastical buildings. In the course of a few years, how many even of these mutilated fragments will be visible? or what records will be left of them save in

³¹ "South Kensington List," p. xxxvii. intro.

³² "S. A. C.," Vol. XXXIII., p. 197.

the pages of antiquarian journals and collections, or the portfolios of enthusiastic ecclesiologists? In some few cases means have been taken to preserve the discovered paintings, as at Arundel, Patcham, Wisborough Green, and elsewhere; but, generally speaking, they have been allowed to crumble off the walls unheeded, or have been covered up again by a fresh coat of whitewash. Yet wall painting is doubtless the noblest form of pictorial art, and however poor in technical merit our own remains may appear, they are all that are left to us of an art to which the greatest of the Italian masters devoted their best efforts, and considered the worthiest for the employment of their genius. If any one doubts this let him listen to a saying of Michael Angelo—a saying which, if a trifle depreciatory of the fair sex, has at least those merits of thoroughness and vigour which characterised the great painter and his works—“Fresco is the only painting, painting in oils is only the art of women and idle and inenergetic men.”
