

EXCAVATIONS AT MERTON PRIORY¹

BY

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THE earlier history of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, or Black Canons as they were commonly called, can hardly now be traced. They do not seem to have made their appearance in England until after the beginning of the twelfth century. It is true of course that certain houses, such as Huntingdon and Taunton, which subsequently followed the Augustinian Rule, were founded at a far earlier date, but the whole matter needs a discussion into which we cannot here enter. Like the Benedictines, each house was a separate corporation bound in no way to other houses. Each canon was sworn to "stabilitas" or permanence in the house of his profession. Like the Benedictines, too, the Canons Regular held their triennial Chapters in accordance with the Lateran Council of the year 1215. Unlike them, however, the Austin Canons might serve the cures of souls, in particular those attached to their own houses. This last is an interesting point as bearing upon the fact that Thomas Becket, who as a child of ten began his education at Merton, at a later date wore the habit of the Merton Canons, while Hubert Walter, bishop of Salisbury, soon after his enthronement as archbishop of Canterbury, became a professed Canon of Merton. The first house to be settled in England would appear to be that of St. Botolph, Colchester, which was established within a year or two of the beginning of the twelfth century. The foundation of Merton must have followed shortly afterwards. Stowe, indeed, would have it in 1092, but this date cannot

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be sustained. Matthew Paris tells us that it was in the year 1117 that Robert the prior, with a few brethren, first occupied Merton and began there to keep inviolably the rule of St. Augustine. The Annals of Waverley give the same date, but the entry there is a marginal note written in a different hand to the body of the manuscript. A late fourteenth-century manuscript at the College of Arms gives so detailed an account of the foundation that it may be a transcript of the earlier testimonies of eye-witnesses. The matter, however, is of little moment, as it affects the date 1117 by only two or three years. The history of Merton may be allowed, somewhat doubtfully, to begin with the grant by Henry I of his vill of Merton to Gilbert the Norman, who brought thither Robert, the sub-prior of Huntingdon, with a few brethren, to be the first prior, and in turn built two wooden churches for their use. The late Major Heales, F.S.A., printed a long précis of the manuscript mentioned above in his Records of Merton Priory, where the story concerning the early history may be read.¹ Our present purpose is only to relate so much of it as will serve as an introduction to the story which we have to tell of the fabric. More certainly that story may be said to begin with the Charter of Royal foundation granted by Henry I, in the year 1121-2. In this charter the vill of Merton was granted directly to the Canons Regular, serving or hereafter to serve God in that place, for the building of a church there in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and for the weal of the souls of the king and queen, and others. In this charter the rights of the see of Winchester are expressly reserved, and it is therefore a little unfortunate that the style Merton Abbey (which first appears in 1521) instead of Merton Priory should, by a careless use, be perpetuated to this day, at least as the name of a railway station built on part of its site (Fig. 1).

Some few years after the date of this charter, perhaps in the year 1130, as related in the document quoted above, the beginning of a new church of stone was made. If it is to be

¹ Bishop Browne, in a lecture delivered at Merton in connexion with the 800th Anniversary celebrations at the parish church, interpreted this document (which he examined) to mean that Gilbert first built the parish church and established Robert and his Canons there in 1115, and that he moved the priory to the site by the Wandle in 1117.

relied on, a statement in *Decem Scriptores*, that after his death at Mortlake at the end of the year 1135, Henry I's body was brought to the new church of the Canons of Merton, would point to the conclusion that this stone church was now well advanced. Of the character of this church nothing has hitherto been known, but we hope to shed some little light upon it in the course of this paper. It is to be noted that the charter of Henry II, 1156-7, confirming the vill of Merton to the Canons does not refer to a church *hereafter* to be built. This is but a scrap of negative evidence as to the completion of the church, but throughout we have had to rely on scraps. We are on more certain ground when we find that the altar of the Holy Cross was dedicated by the bishop of Bangor on 31 October, 1196. This would seem to point to a church now in full use both by the Canons Regular and the laity.

The next event in the history of this earlier church is recorded in the Annals of Dunstable. In December 1222 a great storm occurred, which blew down the two towers at the front of Dunstable church and the tower of Merton, as well as destroying many other buildings and killing many people. The fall of the tower must have caused considerable damage to the rest of the fabric. The grant by Henry III to the prior of six ancient oaks from Windsor Forest in 1225, *ad operationem Ecclesie sue*, and a further grant of ten more in 1227 from the

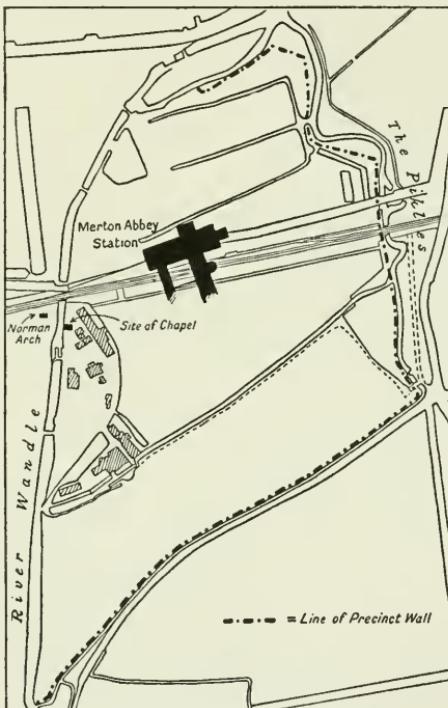


FIG. I.—MERTON PRIORY: SITE PLAN.

forest of Galtres, *ad fabricam Ecclesie sue*, seem to point to something more extensive than the rebuilding of a tower: but it remains to say that a considerable search has failed to throw the smallest documentary light on the extension and rearrangement which must have taken place in the thirteenth century. Lambarde, in his *Topographical Dictionary* (p. 212), makes the statement under the year 1262, without quoting his authority, that the new chapel of St. Mary was built in the reign of Henry III. If we may accept this it may be fairly said to mark the completion of the enlarged stone church, a period with which our observation of the foundations has led us instinctively to agree. Moreover we find, under the 14th of January, 1263, one William Vadlet taking sanctuary in the priory church, and at the same time Henry de Micheham doing the same in the chapel of its infirmary.

The interest taken by Henry III in the priory is instanced by his relatively frequent visits to it, while it is hardly necessary to recall the fact that the laws (*quasdam novas leges*) which pass under the name of the statutes of Merton were issued in 1236. They were the work of the Grand Council of the realm which met no doubt in the chapter-house, the position of which we have been able to determine. Moreover, it was at the cross-roads outside the gate of Merton towards Carshalton that Henry ordered to be set up a fair strong cross in memory of William, Earl of Warenne and Surrey, who died in 1240. We may recall at this point, that it was at Merton that Hubert de Burgh took sanctuary *ante majus altare* in 1232 from the angry citizens of London; and that hither fled William of Wykeham in December, 1376, when forbidden to come within twenty miles of the king's court.

In 1393 the prior pleads to the bishop that the chapel of the Blessed Mary in the church at Merton needs repair estimated at 240 marks, while necessary reparation to the nave would cost 2,000 marks. The total yearly income was but 1,345 marks. This is the last important notice of the fabric until after the surrender of the priory, which is dated the 16th of April, 1538, and signed by the prior, subprior, and twelve other canons. Almost immediately after the surrender of the priory, one John Whytechers of Merton was paid 13s. 4d. for "uncovering the body of the church of Merton Abbey."

Within four months 3,050 tons (loads) of stone had been carted away for the building of the new palace of Nonsuch at Ewell at a contract price for the cartage of 8*d.* a load—*i.e.* 2*d.* a mile. Probably nothing but faced stone would be taken, and this quantity would be provided only by the destruction of the whole church.¹

Between the surrender of the priory and the beginning of the present exploration in 1921, the priory buildings had practically disappeared alike from sight and from the memory of man. No sign whatever remained of the great range of church and cloister, refectory and dormitory, cellarum, chapter-house or prior's lodging. The only mark to distinguish the site as holy ground was the precinct wall enclosing an area of some 50 acres, of which wall a large portion (considerably rebuilt) still remains, and is happily protected by the National Trust (Fig. 1). It was in the collapse of a portion of this wall in 1797 that a charming little head with its sometime gilded fillet was found. The finder was a calico manufacturer, a Mr. Halfhide, who notes as follows : “ It had a gold coronet on the head, the eyes and colour perfect when found, but defaced by washing.” It was presented to the *Society of Antiquaries* by Sir William Hamilton, who explained that the statement as to the gold coronet meant no more than that “ the painting representing the gold and gems on the coronet was much fresher on its first discovery than in its present state.” In 1923 another sculptured head was found on the demolition of a piece of the same wall. This is a grotesque corbel of the thirteenth century, in a very perfect state of preservation.

That the king's leavings should be used as a quarry, in a stoneless district so close to London, was to be expected; and in 1559 we find the churchwardens of St. Mary at Battersea paying 14*s.* for three loads of stones from “ Marten,” and 6*d.* to “ John Tylar ” for “ digging up the stones we bought ”—surely an indication that nothing but foundations were then available. At any rate, by our own day the priory was “ sunk without trace.” It has been said that no sign was left upon the ground itself. A fairly exhaustive search has revealed no documentary description or indication of the character of the

¹ *L. and P. Foreign and Domestic, Hen. VIII*, Vol. XIII, pt. ii, pp. 130–4.

buildings. No local tradition survived. One small engraving of the east end of a "chapel" standing near the river bank and still in occasional use during the eighteenth century was the only record of what had been one of the great priories of England.

Towards the end of the last century the railway came. The station buildings were erected across the site of the south transept of the church, the line and platform crossed the position of the chapter-house. No doubt foundations were met with in the course of the work, but no attention was paid to them, as far as is known.

Then, in 1891, the Lambeth Water Company drove a trench along the station road which just hit the buttresses of the Lady chapel and the columns of the extended quire. Of this a careful record was made by the late Mr. Quartermain, an architect living in the neighbourhood, whose material has been kindly placed at our disposal by his widow. There was not enough, however, in the information obtained in this one trench to indicate what part of the priory buildings had been met with.

Early in June 1914 an old house, known as Abbey House, was pulled down. Built up in the front of it was found a beautiful late-Norman arch, the nature of which is best seen in the photographs with which Mr. G. C. Druce, F.S.A., has kindly supplied us (Plate I).¹ Another Fellow of the Society, Mr. P. M. Johnston, gave an admirable description of this arch and its probable place in the scheme of things to the Surrey Archæological Society (*Surrey Arch. Coll.*, XXVII, 136). He suggested that in the absence of proof to the contrary it formed part of the Hospitium. We should regard this suggestion as well founded. It may be mentioned that parallel to this but now separated from it by the railway is what Mr. Johnston has called a Norman-Jacobeans gateway, which would lead directly to the arch under review. It is fairly certain that the Norman stones in this construction are gleanings from the priory ruins, used in the making of a garden entrance.

In 1919 another trench was driven down the road, this

¹ This arch is preserved *in situ* on the recreation ground of Messrs. Liberty & Co. An Early English capital (Plate II) was also found during the demolition.

PLATE I



NORMAN ARCH FOUND IN 1914.



DETAIL OF MOULDING OF NORMAN ARCH.

time by a Gas Company. It was not so deep as the last one, but it struck two graves walled with stone, the position of which was recorded.

In the same year the land adjoining the station road was bought as a factory site by Messrs. Corfield, Ltd. We should like to say at once that it was a member of that firm, Mr. John Corfield, who first called our attention to the possibilities of the site, and invited us to begin explorations ; and that, throughout our work, the firm has given us every facility for carrying on our investigation on the half of the priory church that lies beneath the surface of their ground.

The factory erected by Messrs. Corfield was fortunately altogether clear of what proved afterwards to be the church site, the only obstruction being a shed, beneath the floor of which we were allowed to probe ; but during the erection of the factory two discoveries were made in the adjoining ground : first, an interment, the bones being uncoffined and accompanied by a fourteenth-century spur ; and secondly, the presence of a large number of masons' chips in a certain small area, together with some spoilt stones. These facts led us to assume that the stone coffins found by the Gas Company were inside the church, and the "knight" with his spur outside the church, and further, that the chips indicated the mason's lodge, which would probably be at the angle of the quire and transept, remote from the cloister. The chips proved to be in the angle between the Lady chapel and the east wall of the quire aisle.

The uncovering of a block of concrete in the autumn of 1921 encouraged us to begin actual excavations. From that first block has gradually grown the plan of a church over 300 feet long, showing the original Norman church, the medieval extension, the chapter-house, the cloister, and some indication at any rate of the conventional buildings. This result could never have been achieved but for the cordial co-operation, not only of Messrs. Corfield, but of the Metropolitan Water Board, when they drove yet another trench along the road, and of the Southern Railway Company, whose station and line cover an important part of the site. The Water Board trench, as we had anticipated, struck the south wall of the Lady chapel and the columns of the nave extension. It also laid bare

considerable sections of the pavement of the church. Throughout the work we were given every assistance in photographing and noting what was found. Sections of the foundations were left undisturbed until they could be photographed complete. Pieces of pavement were specially uncovered for us. The greatest care was taken by the staff that nothing should be passed unnoticed, and that all that could be removed should be carefully preserved.

In this trench two interments of special note were found, both situated beneath the floor of the sanctuary of the church. The first had a rude coffin-shaped series of stones, faced on the inside, surrounding the bones, while the second was of similar character but of more careful workmanship. They were at 5 feet and 2 feet below floor-level respectively. In neither case was there a lid or base, nor a head rest, the stones forming merely a lateral surround to the body. It was thought well to send the stones of the second to the London Museum, where they may now be seen, as representing an interesting and somewhat uncommon form of interment. The two interments found previously by the Gas Company were of similar character and were also in the sanctuary. Two more were subsequently found there—one just in front of the north end of the reredos, and one a little farther west.

The Southern Railway have by their generous assistance made the investigation of their portion of the site possible. They arranged for the digging of the holes between the sleepers of the running lines, which laid bare the foundations of the Norman chapter-house. They similarly exposed portions of the cloister, dormitory, and refectory walls beneath their coal-sidings, and they have allowed and assisted the investigation of the foundations of the nave of the church that lie beneath the station approach. Further, they have marked the principal features of the plan upon the actual site.

Before describing the plan of the priory in detail, it will be well to give a general account of the types of foundation met with. These fall into two main categories :

- (1) A broad raft or sleeper of loose gravel mixed with a little lime, at a depth below the floor-level of the church of from 2 feet to 4 feet.

(2) A wall-like foundation of very hard flint concrete, the surface at or slightly above floor-level.

The Norman east end is marked only by foundations of the first type. The nave colonnade also rested on this type of foundation throughout. The walls of the nave and transept are marked by foundations of the second type, as are those of the chapter-house and monastic buildings; while the thirteenth-century eastward extension had the same type of foundation in a harder and heavier form.

It may be that, in the earlier Norman work, the stone of wall and pillar was carried below the surface of the ground down to the sleeper bed; whereas in the latest Norman and succeeding buildings the foundation was raised with flint concrete to ground-level, where the stonework began.¹

If the nave was finished in late Norman times, the latter principle may have been adopted for walls, while columns were still carried down to a sleeper foundation as formerly. This suggestion would account for the very remarkable fact that absolutely no trace of the position of the columns has yet been found upon the sleeper foundation of the main colonnade of nave and quire. All stonework being of value, the columns were demolished down to the sleeper bed. But the separate bases of hard flint concrete for the four columns added to the quire in the thirteenth century stand clear to-day, at floor-level.

Although the stones of the church building, and even the flint foundations, have been of sufficient value to tempt builder and



FIG. 2.—PAVING TILE (½).

¹ Of course it does not necessarily follow that where the first type only exists now the second never existed. There has been a great deal of grubbing up done during the last three centuries; but on the whole the indications are that the foundations of the earliest work were of the first type only.

road-maker to dig them up and take them away, this does not seem to have been the case with the stone paving of the church, areas of which remain *in situ*. This may be because the paving usually consisted of thin flags of green sandstone which is very friable, and dissolves under the weather into its component sand. The church itself was largely built of this material, and must have been subject to external decay, as it will be remembered was pleaded by the prior in 1393. Flooring tiles are sometimes found in conjunction with the stone flags, with occasional fragments of decorated tile (Figs. 2, 3, and 4).



FIG. 3.—TWO PAVING TILES ($\frac{1}{2}$).

The plan of the church falls into two main periods. We have first a Norman church, probably completed in the twelfth century. This church had a square east end, and transepts with chapels against their east walls, much on the plan of Kirkstall, Rievaulx, and other Cistercian churches (for at that time there was little distinction between the Augustinian and the Cistercian plan). The long aisled nave and the chapter-house with its apsidal end belong to the later part of this period. Then (following perhaps the fall of the central tower) we have a period of extension in the thirteenth century. The north transept was probably rebuilt : the east wall of the sanctuary was removed, and two bays were added to the quire. Aisles were built to the enlarged quire, forming an ambulatory leading to the new Lady chapel at the east end of the church (Fig. 5).

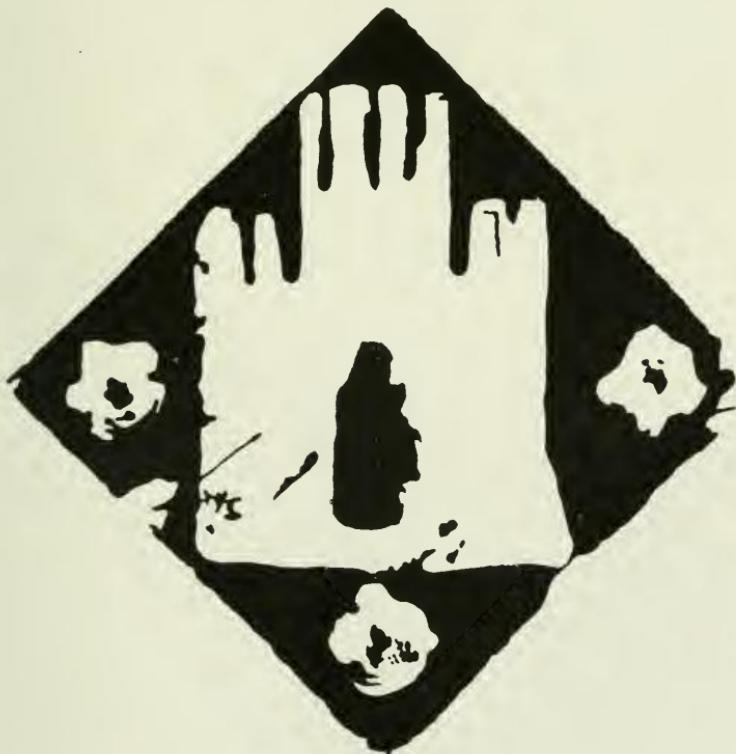


FIG. 4.—TWO PAVING TILES ($\frac{1}{2}$).

I. THE NORMAN CHURCH AND BUILDINGS

The earliest completed church appears to have consisted of a rectangular aisleless chancel, transepts, and an aisled nave. The chancel was 35 feet, or two bays in length and 35 feet between wall centres—a distance that is retained throughout the church for the sleeper foundations of the colonnades.

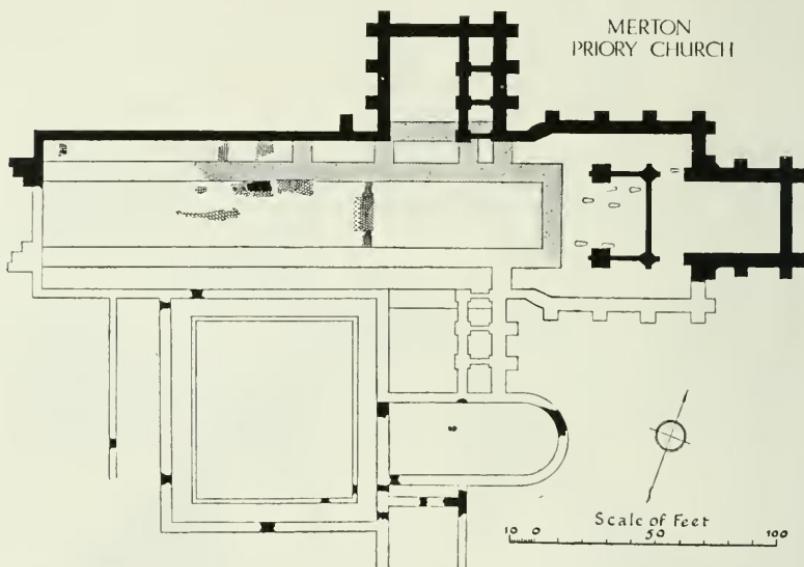


FIG. 5.—GROUND PLAN.

Foundations proved by excavation: floor level, black; below floor level, stipple. Conjectural walls in outline.

Half this distance is assumed to be the length of a bay—an assumption that works out well on the whole. This would give eight bays to the completed nave. The north transept comes square against the chancel wall. The foundation of the wall of the north aisle of the nave is complete up to floor-level for over 100 feet from the west end eastwards; it is of flint concrete 4 feet broad, and shows no trace whatever of buttresses. The presence of a band of the loose deep foundation running north and south at the second bay west of the crossing may indicate some feature of the early church.

At the west end, foundations of a similar character, though somewhat disturbed, indicate a western porch projecting 10 feet from the face of the west wall, with an inner span of 23 feet, the opening expanding, at the outermost of three main orders, to nearly 40 feet. These porch foundations are only found on the north side. On the south (which is under the road) they have disappeared.

Search was made, with the assistance of the Southern Railway, for the foundation of the south wall of the nave. Most of this appears to have been grubbed up (it is reported to have been represented by a ditch a few years ago), but a fragment was found which gave the line and confirmed the total breadth of the church—61 feet.

The conventional buildings, which may probably be also referred to the Norman period, have been located as far south as the north wall of the refectory, by means of trial holes dug with the assistance of the railway company at such spots as were possible—between the sleepers of the running lines and sidings, and alongside the tracks. It was impossible to explore farther south, as the ground is covered by the railway coal yard, which has recently been made good with a foot or so of flints and chalk well rolled in. Enough has been found, however, to indicate with certainty the dimensions of the cloister and surrounding ranges, and of the chapter-house. In all cases the foundation was of hard flint concrete. The result is best shown by reference to the plan (Fig. 5).

There is a striking analogy to the Norman cloister and chapter-house of St. Augustine's Abbey, Bristol, another Augustinian house, as its name shows. This is all the more interesting, inasmuch as the thirteenth-century extension of the east end of the church is almost identical with the similar extension at Bristol, as will be seen.

To deal first with the chapter-house—this was a building 70 feet by 30 feet (interior measurement) with an apsidal east end. Although the south transept of the church cannot be investigated, being under the platform and booking office of the railway station, the position of the north wall of the chapter-house, equidistant from the centre of the church with the north wall of the north transept, raises a strong presumption that the chapter-house was, at any rate after the enlargement of the

church, against the south transept wall. The plan and proportions of the chapter-house are almost identical with those of Bristol. A small fragment of curb-stone and tiling found under the railway line indicates the central walk or aisle, 10 feet broad.

A slype was found on the south side of the chapter-house, and the interior breadth of the dormitory was determined—30 feet. The cloister proved to be rectangular, 93 feet by 85 feet, with a cloister walk 8 feet broad. The internal breadth of the cellarer's range was 20 feet.

2. THIRTEENTH-CENTURY WORK

- (a) The North Transept.
- (b) The extension of the quire and construction of the Lady Chapel at the east end.

(a) *The North Transept.*

The existing foundations of the North Transept are those of a thirteenth-century rebuilding, probably upon the Norman plan. There were originally four small chapels, each 12 feet square internally, against the eastern wall, the innermost being removed at a later date to make an entrance to the aisle of the extended quire. Buttresses indicate a vaulted roof. The buttress next to the north corner of the east wall does not correspond exactly with the first chapel division, since the buttresses are spaced from the centre of the north wall, and the chapels are not.

(b) *The Quire Extension.*

The quire extension, with the construction of the Lady chapel behind the high altar and quire aisles leading thereto, was the last great expansion of the priory church, and probably was completed by the middle of the thirteenth century. The work added 100 feet to the length of the church, and must have made a vast difference in its internal effect. The Norman east wall was demolished, and two bays of $19\frac{1}{2}$ feet were added to the quire. The sleeper foundation was not continued eastwards, but four solid foundations of flint concrete were made for the piers of the extension. These are of different shape, the western pair being squares of 6 feet 6 inches placed normally to

PLATE II



CAPITAL FROM SITE OF ABBEY HOUSE.



ARCH OF REREDOS FOUNDATION.

the axis of the church, the eastern pair circular below, diamond-shaped at ground-level. The foundations of the reredos and of screen walls between the piers were also found. The reredos foundation consisted of three stone arches with flint concrete between. These arches were constructional only (Plate II).

The aisle wall foundations are of very heavy flint concrete nearly 6 feet in width, with square buttresses opposite the piers. They extend one bay beyond the eastern pier, before returning to the entrance of the Lady chapel. The latter is 35 feet in length by 30 feet in width internally, and ends in an east wall, the foundations of which have been reinforced on its east side at a later date by an additional wall of concrete 3 feet thick containing lumps of worked stone from demolitions.

Against the north side of the westernmost buttress of the north aisle wall was a small stone platform, 6 feet by 3 feet, which from its arrangement we thought might have been the base of a stone cross overlooking the graveyard. Alongside the next buttress are some flagstones. It was close to the north-east corner of this aisle that the first find was made—the interment with the spur, already referred to. To the east of this aisle the great number of stone chips, with some spoiled stones, were turned up, which indicated the mason's yard.

A very interesting feature is the curve in the aisle wall soon after it leaves the transept. At first the line of the nave wall, slightly south of the line of the transept chapel, is accepted ; then the wall is swung out 2 feet, so as to give a breadth for the ambulatory of $15\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

The plan of this extension, as was pointed out to us by a Fellow of the Society, Mr. Sydney Kitson, is almost identical with the extension eastwards of St. Augustine's Abbey, Bristol. So close is it, indeed, that it is impossible not to believe that the builders of Bristol had Merton in their minds. St. Augustine's extension is a little later (1300–50), and one bay larger. The description given of it by Mr. Roland Paul, F.S.A., in his account of St. Augustine's in *Archæologia*, Vol. LXIII, might have been written of Merton, and we quote it here :

"The new scheme, as can be seen by the plan, was to rebuild the eastern arm on a much larger scale. The new quire and presbytery were of five bays with aisles, and east of this was a

Lady Chapel of two bays. . . . The plan adopted by Knowle enabled him to build a large part of his new work without disturbing the Norman presbytery and high altar ; that is, to complete the Lady Chapel, and certainly the easternmost bay of the presbytery. The extra width given to the aisles would almost have enabled him to build the outer wall on the south side."

3. PAVEMENTS AND OTHER REMAINS IN THE NAVE

Indications of the arrangement of the nave of the church are found in certain patches of pavement which have come to light and some masses of concrete that are not very easy to explain. The most important piece of paving is just west of the entry to the crossing. Here sufficient was found, during the excavations of the Metropolitan Water Board, to indicate the character of the paving at this point across the whole breadth of the nave. The design consists of a stone paving 14 feet broad, with tile edging 6½ feet broad on each side. The tile edging consists first of a band of patterned tiles placed diamond-wise next the stone flags ; and then of red flooring tiles, placed square, and seven deep. The latter measure just under 7 inches square, the former 5½ inches. The stone paving itself appears to mark a division of the church, possibly the entrance to the quire or to some special area at the crossing. The division is marked by two lines of rectangular stones laid across the church. These are just under 1 foot long by 8½ inches wide. Up to them from the west comes a pavement of stones set diamond-wise, each nearly 10 inches square. Between and to the east of the rectangular bands the diamonds are smaller—8½ inches square. Opposite these transverse bands the tiles stop abruptly at the edge of the sleeper foundation. They are laid on sand over clay filling. The pavement appears to widen after passing this point.

At the opening of the crossing is a mass of hard flint concrete with a core rising to floor-level which may be the disfigured foundation of one of the crossing piers. Just to the west of the transverse bands lies a mass of concrete that is frankly inexplicable. A heavy mass of flint concrete some 16 feet long rests on the sleeper foundation and has along its southern

edge a flint wall foundation at floor-level, 2 feet broad. Against the latter on its inner (south) side is a large mass of later concrete 7 feet broad by 12 feet long, containing worked stone from demolition. A few floor tiles were in position on the east end of this, set to a ledge on the aforementioned wall-core. Large stones underground formed a descending abutment at the west end of this mass, towards the north.

There should be a column somewhere in the space occupied by these masses, but it is difficult to fit one in. It is tempting to think of the inner late foundation as a part of the pulpitum. At any rate, the character of the paving entirely changes immediately to the west of it. The tile borders have ceased and the stone flags cover the whole floor. They are no longer diamond, but of a fairly uniform breadth of about $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and varying lengths. The stones are laid diagonally, the direction of the unbroken joints varying. This paving is edged with a narrow strip of hard flint concrete, perhaps the foundation of a screen wall.

Ten feet west of the change of paving a double transverse line of rectangular stones may again mark some line of importance. It is half-way between the foundation just described and the last we have to deal with. This consists of a solid flint foundation, $10\frac{1}{2}$ feet long by 4 feet broad at the east end. On the inner (south) side it is edged with faced stones. It is surrounded, except at the back, by pavement of the character last described, on which, on the west side, are superimposed some tiles.

A mass of foundation not unlike this in shape was noted by Mr. Quartermain when the trench was driven through in 1891, in a position that proves, on plotting, to be a corresponding position on the south side of the aisle.

Surely these two masses are the foundations of the side portions of the Rood screen. There would probably have been a central portion upon which the Rood stood, and in front of which the people's altar would be placed. This central foundation seems to have disappeared. There would have been a doorway on each side between the central and side portions.

The pavement of the remainder of the nave appears to have consisted of flagstones laid diagonally, of the type last described.

The north aisle was for the most part paved with rectangular slabs of stone, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad and of varying length, laid in courses at right angles to the wall. At the west end of the north aisle, however, the flooring was brown glazed tiles, $9\frac{1}{8}$ inches square. Four of these were found in position, and the seatings of others were clear throughout the last two bays. Wherever paving has been found, the crumbling remains of an earlier pavement have been found beneath the later paving.

4. INTERMENTS

The interments under the sanctuary have already been described. In addition to the six examples there of the cist of separate stones (which it is not unreasonable to suppose are the graves of priors or high officials of the priory) two burials outside the church call for notice. One was a stone coffin hollowed out of one piece of limestone and containing the skeleton of a very large man, whose body had been crammed into the coffin with the greatest difficulty—and this although the internal length of the coffin was over 6 feet. The coffin was placed against the north wall of the aisle near the west end. There were grooves for a lid which no doubt disappeared at the time of the demolition, as the top of the coffin was at ground-level.

The other was 30 feet south of the north transept, and consisted of a slab with moulded edge resting on a surround of stone faced on the outside, the middle being filled with concrete. Presumably the interment is below.