

preserved in our English Churches; they are however far from being numerous. In the large series of mural paintings preserved in the Chancel of Chalgrove Church, Oxfordshire, relating to the Life of our Lord, the Presentation in the Temple is given in its proper place. The artist of the Leicester glass treats the subject very simply. The priest, standing under a canopy and behind an altar-shaped table, is about to receive the Infant Saviour from His mother, who is in the act of so presenting Him to the Lord. Behind her stands Joseph, carrying in a basket the enjoined offering of the poor—two turtle doves or two young pigeons—wherewith to redeem the first-born. Near at hand are two female figures bearing tapers, thus mixing up in a characteristic manner the modern custom of the day with the Levitical ceremonies. Joseph is properly represented as an old, bald-headed, but by no means a weakly man. In ancient art the woman Salome is usually represented as in attendance upon the Virgin Mary; one of the two female figures here given may be intended for her.

MR. VINCENT WING of Melton-Mowbray contributed the following Paper on

### CHURCH VANDALISM.

It is a painful, but necessary, business which devolves on our Society to describe with exactness,\* and to register in the volumes of the “Transactions,” injuries perpetrated on ancient structures; for by this means, should better times arrive, redintegration may possibly be practicable—the following paper is written accordingly:—

At the west end of Melton Mowbray Church there is a large Galilee Porch with its piscina and other relics. It is gorgeous with sculpture of the very best description of the periods of Henry III. and Edward II. And, precious as it is to the artist, it is equally so to the ecclesiologist and antiquary. It is a special object of interest, as having, amongst other things, the unusual number of *four* All Comers' Apertures. We give this name suggestively: for *Lychnoscope*, *Low Side Window*, etc., is not satisfactory nomenclature; and as it may be proved that these mysterious openings were used for various purposes—such as witnessing mass, receiving the host, confession, doles, etc., in connexion with solitarii, or lepers, or persons inadmissible to the

\* This critique it was imperative on the Honorary Local Secretary to write, and it is necessarily satirical to be useful as a deterrent in other cases; which consideration, in conjunction with the deservedly favourable remarks contained in it, will obviate any charge of bitterness. It has been borne in mind for precaution, that on the one hand such mischief would ordinarily betray into exaggeration, whilst on the other the mortification of this exposure would sharpen, if it excited, reproach; and consequently, in every particular, accuracy has been very carefully considered: future generations, therefore, may rely upon exactness in guidance obtained from this contribution to the Society's records.

interior, a more comprehensive name is required. The unusual number is accounted for by the existence of a spring a mile and a half off, which in the fourteenth century was more celebrated than any other for the cure of leprosy: a building that was formerly a residence for as many as fourteen priests is still standing, and is contiguous to the churchyard. Then as to architectural merit—The inner doorway of the porch, which was originally the chief portal of the church, has its superior mouldings tastefully grouped in distinct orders, the capitals have the graceful conventional foliage of the period, and the proportions and arrangements are of the most exquisite design. On each side is discernible in the wall the outline of a niche, no doubt, of corresponding beauty. Upon the erection of the porch the doorway was left untouched, but the niches were superseded by Decorated ones, the canopies of which are there, and though overhanging modern recesses, still exhibit much of their beautiful carving. On the outside there are six niches of the same date and character tolerably perfect, but the caps, the crowning ornaments of the octagonal buttresses that flank the front, have long disappeared. The outer doorway has a profusion of the vignette moulding most delicately undercut, and is enriched with ballflower, foliated capitals, finial, etc., all first rate. For antiquarian interest and art beauty, it is difficult to conceive anything more worthy of protection against Vandalism than this gem of architecture.

What, then, has been its fate in this century of restoration? Many years ago the Goths and Vandals invaded it; and finding the Early English doorway chipped in places, they worked down the mouldings of capitals and bases, leaving the beautifully carved foliage projecting and other parts out of place; the shafts which were detached ones, they pushed back into a bed of mortar; and they introduced a head on each side where the label previously came down to the abacus. Moreover, as swine with pearls before them, they have all but ruined these intensely interesting four Apertures: they have taken from them their special characteristics, by removing the mysterious blocking of masonry, introducing glazing, and making them and the whole interior of the porch as new as a coat fresh from the tailor. Windows were rudely opened in the front when the porch in the last century was used for a school: the recesses of these they have religiously preserved!—converting them into a sort of aumbries! And earlier strings and bases, which had been exterior and were cut off upon this part becoming in the next century interior to the chapel, they have foolishly, and at considerable expense, put on again! Then, to complete their renovation of the stonework, with marvellous taste they surrounded the floor with a stone garret skirting, which would conveniently receive the epitaph of these *little Wrens*—“*Si monumentum quæris circumspice.*” Hereupon they rested, as if their

innovating strength were for a while exhausted. Being somewhat out of breath after their iconoclastic campaign, they found themselves too feeble, it may be, to attempt the roof; and this afterwards had the good fortune to be consigned to, and well executed under a professional architect, which gave us hope for the future.

But—alas for sublunary uncertainty!—another campaign was commenced; and, whilst Professor G. G. Scott was now doing battle with decay and effecting true restoration in other parts of the church, some *Black* party—not to say Hottentot—unfortunately begins anew the war of havoc at this aforesaid porch. So this rich and beautiful parish heirloom one morning makes its appearance with something like a map of the Black Sea on the pavement in front of it, and upon entering it is found that his Sable Majesty has erected his throne and converted it into a coke store! By this means the walls and the new roof were to be blackened until they came up to the taste of their guardians. After some time this was arrested and the coke removed. But how about the further innovations? In another attack the pathway in front of the porch was lowered to improve the view, as they supposed, and cleverly enough they left the footprints of their march in—what they call a *tread*—a serious crack down this exquisitely beautiful front, throwing at the same time a great part slightly out of its perpendicular, as it seems, by unskilful underpinning. Heads, finial, etc., at this time they restored with Ancaster, instead of Barnack or Clipsham, stone, making them look smooth like compost. The turrets are capped with a *flat* production of a time farther back: we hope they will eventually have gorgeous pinnacles to harmonise as, we conclude, they once did with the rest of the structure—the entrance to York chapter-house has a suitable guide to it. The new side parapets, like the roof, have been intelligently designed. But this year of grace, 1872, has arrived,—and here they are again!! the Goths and Vandals with their *axes and hammers!* Their present onslaught is made upon the doorways of the porch. In architectural beauty the first thing is proportion; and upon the examples under consideration the most diligent lucubrations were spent, with little calculation of present ruin. Our friends, having previously arranged one step up and two steps down into the church at this entrance, have awaked to discover that one step down only would land them more conveniently. So they plough a lower passage through the porch floor and lengthen the door jambs to meet it. Hereby the inner doorway loses the richness of its archivolt by disproportioned elevation, and what was a paragon is thus made faulty. But hark! they break the legs of the outer doorway, that unique, as well as exquisite gem! They lower the bases, and lengthen the jambs by inserting a cross piece, six and a quarter inches deep, through the shafts and vertical mouldings—this destruction of proportion they may think

adds a grandeur, though it be a grandeur of folly only. The serious question is—Can nothing be done to restrain incompetency from acting without advice of the professional architect? This porch is probably the gift of an incumbent of yore, who was no ignoramus in architecture, but a prodigy as to the art, and whose after-celebrity casts pre-eminently a lustre on the long line of the pastorate of Melton Mowbray: we refer to that most illustrious of the natives of Melton, William de Melton, the builder of the nave of York Cathedral, archbishop, lord chancellor, etc., etc.,—surely his ghost will haunt the bed-sides of these faulty conservators of his memory! But even great men dishonour their cloth when they abandon their calling for illegitimate meddling. This doughty Archbishop mustered an army of eight thousand men, and sallied forth to chastise the Scots for their incursions. He had with him the Bishop of Ely, the Bishop of Norwich, the Abbot of St. Mary's, York, the Abbot of Selby, the Dean of York, and Clerks, Monks, and Canons very numerous. The Scotch commanders, however, understood war better than their mitred foemen. Melton with his forces crossed the river Swale near the village of Mitton, but before they could form they were conquered—one-half the number were slain or drowned, half the remainder were put where church destroyers deserve to be, and of the leaders but few returned with the fugitive Archbishop to tell the story. This was called "The White Battle," from the number of ecclesiastics engaged in it. Having given the obverse of church matters, justice demands a glance at the reverse of them to the credit of those who have so tarnished their fair fame. Much of the money has been admirably spent, and the contractors' work is well done. Melton church was in a hazardous state, and at a great cost it has been made safe to a certain extent; but still with the exception of the south transept, which is originally built weaker, and all its pillars, with the south front, and the south-west pier of the tower—which partly has support from the transept, incline southward. If Melton should ever be as lucky as other places, and obtain a gift of a thousand pounds, the donor would do well to stipulate for its expenditure on this transept—the roof here is much decayed also: he might hereby be the means of saving from a fall the whole edifice, which is one of the nation's proudest monuments. The restoration is a heavy work, and the financial success inadequate; many thousands are wanted to complete. The district is unfavourable. The lay rector has liberally restored the chancel, but, with this exception, only one subscription as much as £300 has been received, and that from a townsman. For a year or two the collection lingered at a forlorn modicum; when the ladies came to the rescue, and by a famous bazaar initiated the work, converting despair into sanguine expectation. The vicar since, with untiring energy, has chiefly helped to bring up the means to the present

amount of more than £6000. A great portion of this has been expended on the nave and the basement of the tower; the decayed roofs, and the cracked and inclining walls have been wisely made right, and many great improvements have been effected. But, without tracking our restorers through all their aberrations in the church as well as in the porch, it would seem blind, not less than negligent, to omit mention of the monstrosity of the floor of the nave and transepts. Instead of having one level, they have divided it *unnecessarily, dangerously, and foolishly*, into several platforms; this is an innovation so peculiar, that it ought to be made known that it has not been directed by Mr. Scott, and can only be construed of "fancy bred" in the moon. We would offer them our sincere thanks for the laudable efforts to restore and beautify this magnificent edifice, and would not less thank them if they would undo all that they have done without Professor Scott's approbation.

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*September 10th and 11th, 1872.*

#### THE ANNUAL SUMMER MEETING

Of the Society was held (in conjunction with the Architectural Society of the Archdeaconry of Northampton) at Lutterworth, on the 10th and 11th September, 1872, under the Presidency of the Rev. W. F. Wilkinson, the Rector of the parish.

At 11.30 there was short Morning Prayer in the parish church, after which

The Rev. G. A. POOLE proceeded to explain the Architectural features of the fabric, which has been thoroughly restored by Sir Gilbert Scott since the Leicestershire Society's visit in 1861. He began by remarking that his duty that morning was a very light one. The great feature of interest in that church was its connection with John Wycliffe, and as that was entirely theological and historical, and as, with the theological and historical, he had on that occasion no concern, he had no intention of entering upon that particular subject that day. The recently inserted monument and brasses he would leave out of the question, and even the historical question he should touch only in so far as the church told its own history through its architectural character. As they were all aware, there were certain indications in every architectural building, which had any pretensions to architecture, by which they could tell, within a certain small number of years, the time when it was erected. Although most churches had been considerably disturbed by restorations they still found indications of Saxon work,