

Lullington Church.

BY THE REV. D. M. CLERK.

THE small church which I am about to introduce to the notice of the members of this society, is that of the parish of Lullington. It is situated in the county of Somerset, and diocese of Bath and Wells, in the archdeaconry of Bath, and the deanery of Frome, from which latter place it is distant three miles, in a northerly direction. The river Frome, waters the lower part of the parish.

Lullington is mentioned in the Domesday Survey, under the name of "Loligtone," and appears to have been granted by the Norman Invader, to the bishop of Coutances. It was held in the time of Edward the Confessor, by Earl Harold, and stated then to have been worth £4; but in the time of William the Conqueror, 100 shillings. Afterwards the manor, with the advowson of the church, (held of the duke of Lancaster, as of the manor of Trowbridge,) was conferred on the priory of Longleat, in the county of Wilts. At the dissolution of that priory, (29 Henry VIII.) it was granted to John, prior of the Carthusian monastery at Hinton, in the county of

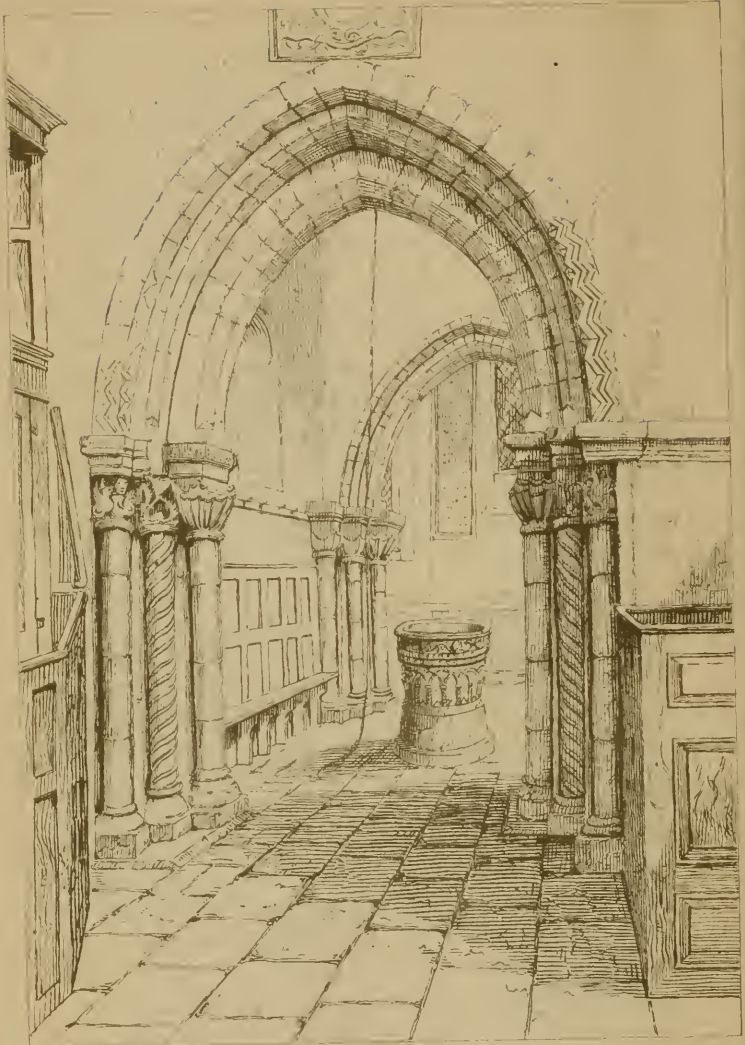
Somerset ; but the succeeding prior ceded it to the king, who, in the thirty-second year of his reign, (1541) granted it to the earl of Hertford, who the next year (1542) sold it, with the Longleat estate, to Sir John Thynne, from whom it descended to the late Thomas, Marquis of Bath, and has now passed into the hands of the proprietor of the neighbouring park of Orchardleigh, — Cox, Esq. The present incumbent is the Rev. W. M. H. Williams.

The CHURCH which we are describing, is one of those puzzling and curious buildings which have the tower between the nave and the chancel, without any visible signs of transepts. Its ground plan consists of a Nave, a Tower, and a Chancel, with an aisle, transept or chantry, (as you may please to call it,) on the South side, with a South porch adjoining the chantry, west of it ; the chantry and porch together filling up the whole length of the nave on the south side. The length of the nave, is twenty-five feet six inches ; the tower, twelve feet three inches ; the chancel, seventeen feet ten inches, altogether making the length from the inside east, to the inside west wall, fifty-five feet seven inches. The width of the nave, is seventeen feet two inches ; that of the chancel, is rather greater, seventeen feet ten inches. The width under the tower, is twelve feet ; the chapelry or aisle is nearly square, viz., fourteen feet, by fourteen feet three inches.

The whole of the CHANCEL (I begin at the East, following the Camden scheme in my description,) appears to have been added during the Decorated period ; probably not much later than 1320, A.D. The Eastern window is of three lights ; the centre light is pointed, the other two with circular heads, and each with three foliations. On the inside, the head of the window arch is finished off very prettily, with a moulding which loses itself in the wall

just where the arch stops and the jamb begins. In the furniture of the chancel there is nothing remarkable. There is a piscina, with a trefoiled orifice and no shelf, but of poor workmanship. On the North side is one good decorated window, with a square head. On the South side there are two windows, the one square-headed, and corresponding with that on the North side ; the other a small one of two lights, and of plain Decorated character. The wall in which this window is inserted, projects six inches beyond the face of the other portion of the wall, and may have been a part of the old Norman building. The width of this window is only two feet nine inches to the outer edge of each splay, and the height is four feet nine inches also to the edge of the splay, which splay (wide, not deep,) is about nine inches all round. The keystone has apparently dropped, which makes it appear as if it were a round-headed arch. This window I consider to be very curious ; I know not what to make of it, nor what was its use.

The Piers which support the tower towards the chancel, are Norman, but they do not correspond, singular to say, the one with the other. That on the north side, is adorned with three shafts, while the pier on the south, has only two. The capitals of the principal shafts, are rather more ornamented than the other, but all of them may be described as *plain*. The third shaft on the north side therefore, stands out from the wall at present, supporting *nothing*. As to whether or not the wall was originally thicker and cut away, together with the shaft on the South side, I will not undertake to decide ; but this appears to me the most probable solution of the matter, from the circumstance that the *arch* which both piers support, is pointed ; and there is on the south side, close to the pier, a doorway



W. H. Sturton

LOWEY ABBEY, LOOKING EAST.
SHELFOLD CHURCH

leading into the staircase turret, which doorway and staircase are of far more modern construction. The arch from the tower to the chancel, is much earlier,—so much so, that, were it not for the corresponding arch into the nave, (which I shall presently describe,) it might admit a doubt whether it were not the original construction. I am myself inclined to place it in the Early English period, towards the Decorated era.

The arch into the nave is good, and very singular. It has but few mouldings, and is pointed. On each side, portions about three feet from the pillars on the nave side, are carved with Chevron ornament, and this ornament stops (in my opinion) as if the crown of the arch had once been *round*, and altered from *round* to *pointed*. The piers which support this arch, are very similar to that under the south side of the chancel arch, the secondary shafts being twisted. One, (the south-west shaft) was restored very fairly about twenty years ago.

The south aisle, or chantry, is separated from the nave by a very good plain chamfered *late* Early English arch, verging on Decorated. The piers, or rather pillars, which support it, are very good, the capitals boldly carved with foliage. The shafts touch the wall, but are separate from it. There is one pillar only on each side, of dimensions well proportioned to the size of the arch, and the weight of capitals it has to bear. The East window of this aisle is good, with a drip or string-course round it, which is stopped by a corbel on the North side; that on the other side is gone, if there ever was any. The window is of two lights, connected at the top by a quatrefoil circle; the two long lights have no foliations. I should suppose its date (and in fact that of the whole of this part of the chantry) to be about 1280, A.D., earlier, by some thirty

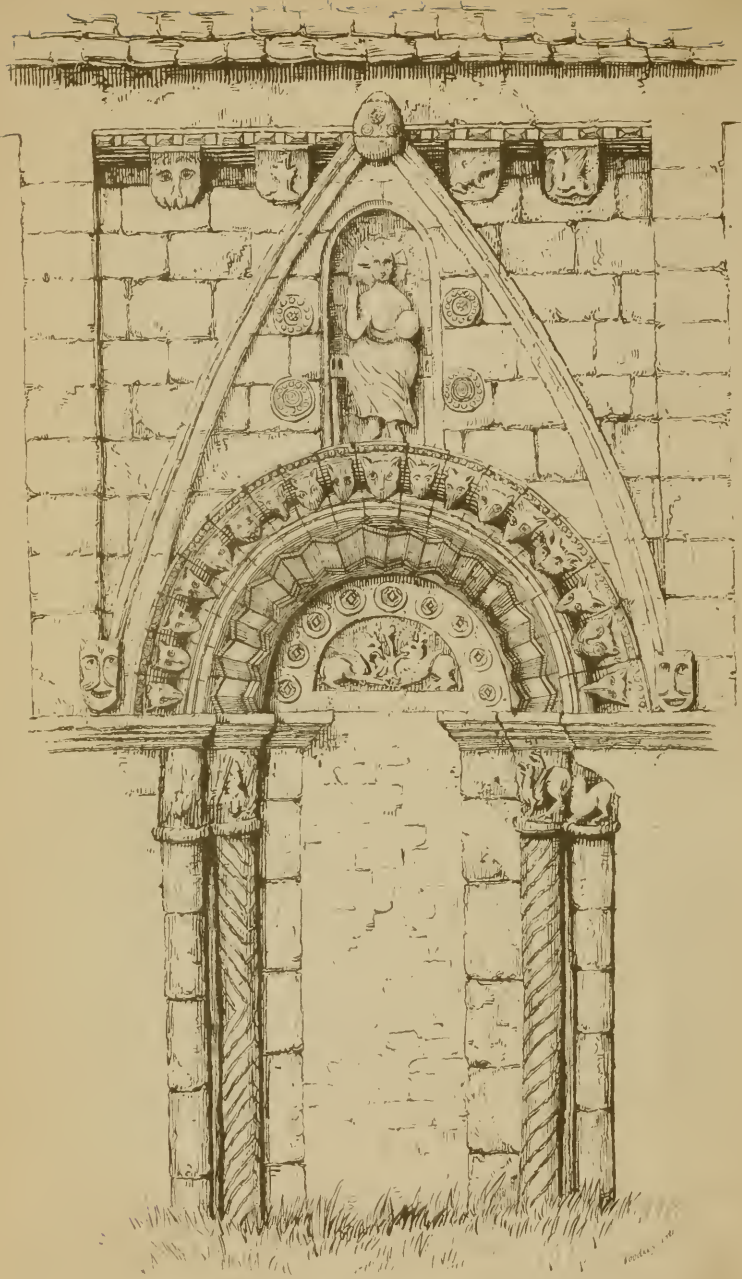
years at least, than that of the chancel. The South window is much mutilated; the drip remains, with the westernmost corbel. It was formerly of three lights, and of the same date as the window I have just described. There is a *piscina* showing that there was once here a chantry altar. Its top is mutilated, but the bottom is boldly cut, and projects from the south wall ten inches. There is also a plain niche on the south side of the east wall, and a corbel-crowned head on the west side of the *piscina*, which may be a bracket; or it may be the finish of the drip of the south window, brought round to serve as a bracket.

The FONT is very curious, situated under the Tower. It is circular, of an early Norman date, and figured in "Britton's Architectural Antiquities." It bears this inscription, carved in Roman letters :

"HOC FONTIS SACRO PEREUNT DELICTA
LAVACRO."

There is an Inscription on the edge, of which I give a copy, but can make nothing of it.

The TOWER itself is square and low, and of three stages. The windows, both on the north and south sides of the lower stage, are square-headed Decorated, and of two lights, and correspond with those in the chancel. The windows in the upper or belfry-stage are rather early Perpendicular, and are filled with stone, pierced in quatrefoils. The tower is surmounted by a plain Perpendicular battlement of good character; the pinnacles are gone, which must have given to the tower a crown-like appearance; their bases project beyond the surface of the tower. The string-courses are good, the upper one adorned with bold gurgoyles. The groining of the Tower is gone, and all the roofs are plastered inside.



NORTH DOORWAY, LITTLETON CHURCH

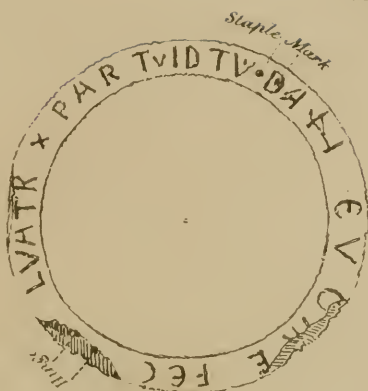
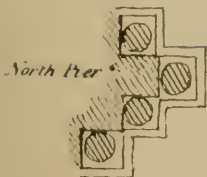
The Beacon or staircase-turret, is octagonal, and on the south-east angle ; the line of beacon *south*. The staircase, which is spiral, enters (as I mentioned) at the South-East corner inside the Tower, the pillar being cut away (as I suppose) to make room for the chapelry. The cap of the turret is flat, and formed of three stones, fitting in and probably intended to support the beacon fire. The thickness of the walls is, North and South, two feet eight inches only,—east and west, two feet eleven inches. The general character of the Tower is low and flat. Query—pared away ?

The West window is small and poor ; the tracery cut out, the opening may be Norman.

The entrances are on the North and South sides. The North doorway is an exceedingly curious specimen of Norman work. It is figured by "Britton." It is composed of three members. The interior member of the arch is flat, and ornamented with a sort of flower ; it is supported under the impost-moulding with a kind of square jamb. The second member is a series of well-cut chevrons, the points of the chevrons project outwards. It is supported under the impost by twisted columns. The capitals are carved with animals of some kind. The third member of the arch is ornamented with what I believe is usually termed the bird's beak moulding, though in this case the carved heads are not those of birds. On either side of this moulding is a bead ornamented with dots. It is supported under the impost on the east side by a plain shaft with a cushion-capital ; on the other side by a similar pillar with a capital carved with a centaur. The crown of the arch above the impost-moulding is filled up with a single stone, on which is carved two animals supporting, or fighting for, a Cross. Perhaps

some Antiquarian may explain the device, which is not uncommon in Norman doorways. I have supposed it to be a representation of a Lamb holding a Cross, and combating with the Power of Evil. Over the doorway is a niche, in which is a figure, probably of the Deity, a nimbus round the head, and with one hand held up, as in the act of blessing, or, it may be, holding a sceptre; the other hand held a figure, perhaps that of the Son. There are four annulets sculptured around the niche, two on each side. Then follows a very singular drip (supported on queer corbel-heads) running for some inches above the impost-moulding, and enclosing both the arch and niche, extending to the corbel-tabling. It has no regular form whatever, and what arch it was meant for I cannot say. The South porch forms the principal entrance; the porch is of poor late Perpendicular, with a small West window, square-headed, and trefoiled. The inner doorway is Norman, quite plain; but good, and the arch here is again filled up from the impost-moulding with a flat stone, which has a circle upon it. I would call attention to this doorway, as being the origin of the doorways with a square opening, we so often find. The chancel doorway on the south side is very flat, with an ogee head and drip, the opening, trefoiled. The buttresses to the nave on the north and west sides, are flat; Norman pilasters, projecting seven and nine inches respectively, finishing on the North side under the corbel-table. The church has no parapets. The corbel block-table is the only moulding except the "set off" close to the ground. There is an elaborate Cross fleury on the gable of the South chapelry. The buttresses of the chancel are bold, and set angle-ways, running about two-thirds of the height of the Walls.

The Illustrations to this paper are executed by Mr. T. H. Hair on stone, from original sketches by Mr. C. E. Giles.



Woolly 18th. Causton

1874