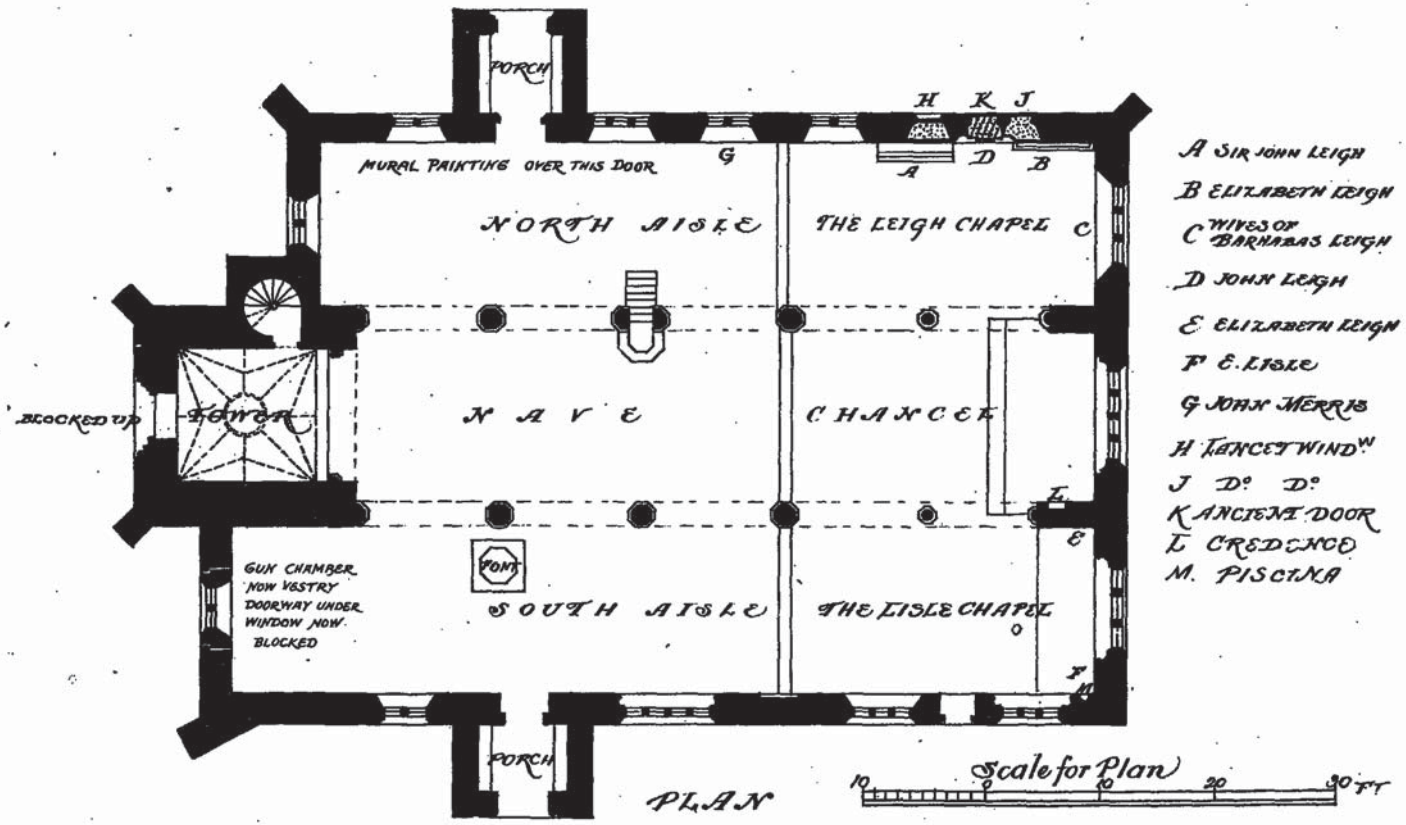
HANTS FIELD CLUB. 1892.



PLAN OF S. PETER'S CHURCH, SHORWELL, I.W.

ST. PETER'S CHURCH, SHORWELL,[1] I.W.

By the Rev. G. E. Jeans, M.A., F.S.A., Vicar.

ST. PETER'S CHURCH, SHORWELL, I.W.

The guide books to the Isle of Wight, which often repeat one another with slavish unanimity, in describing this church give an account of its origin, which is obviously contradicted by an examination of the structure itself. Borrowing from a passage in Sir John Oglander's notes, which says that Shorwell "was made a p'risch in Edward ye 3rd his time," they mostly give the 14th century as the date of the building. A very slight knowledge of architecture, however, will show that, while there is some earlier and much later work, there is nothing except the east window of the north aisle that belongs to the reign of Edward III., or indeed to the 14th century at all. The church is almost wholly Perpendicular, of the middle of the 15th century, but still retaining a portion of the north wall and the south door of an earlier church of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century.

[1] The substance of a paper read before the Hampshire Field Club at Shorwell, Aug. 24, 1892.

The original church then was merely the eastern half of the present north aisle, being at first a small Norman chapel, first built *(circa* 1100*)* for the use of the tenants of the manor of Northcourt, and paying a yearly pension of 20s. to the Benedictine Priory of Carisbrook (a daughter of the great Abbey of Lire, in Normandy), from which the chapel was served. This chapel apparently extended westward about as far as the present chancel step ; for the difference between the Early English and the far inferior Perpendicular walling can there be plainly seen on the outside. One lancet window now blocked by the tomb of Sir John Leigh, and traces of another, and apparently also of a doorway, or possibly a round-headed window, are visible at this point.

About a century later the little Norman chapel was rebuilt in the Early English style, as indicated by the remains above mentioned. As the tenants were now increasing in number, the size of the chapel was probably doubled, and now covered the site of the present chancel, as well as the chancel north aisle, the north half of the church possibly being, as Mr. Stone suggests,[1] for the tenants of North Shorwell or Northcourt, and the south half for those of South Shorwell, or Westcourt, and Wolverton. In appearance the church then probably resembled the present church of Whitwell, on a somewhat smaller scale, consisting solely of two small equal aisles, or rather naves, with a chancel at the end of each, not marked off in the structure at all. The present south doorway inside the porch probably belongs to the Early English church, either as its west, or, more likely, its south door, in which case, it may have stood about between the 2nd and 3rd pillars of the present south arcade of the nave. It is a remarkable doorway, ornamented with a rough kind of nail-head moulding and a shallow-cut chevron, of a rudimentary type. The returned label-moulding does not fall on to the impost of the piers, and this has been taken as evidence of the door being only a debased copy of some earlier work. The true explanation, doubtless, is that the label of the doorway formed part of a string-course surround-

[1] "Architectural History of the Isle of Wight," by Percy G. Stone, F.R.I.B.A., 1892, to which excellent work, a magnificently illustrated County History, the author will have occasion further to refer.

ing the chancel on one side at least. The work seems to be about the beginning of the 13th century, and the returns of the label, which have been thought to be against this date, really confirm it. In its original position the label was part of a horizontal string which broke over the arch when it met it. The work seems to have been re-used with little or no alteration. Therefore we may safely regard this interesting doorway as part of the same Early English church as the east part of the north wall, which was of the Lancet period.

These two parallel naves, each with its own altar, bring us to the important and disputed question, as to whether they formed practically two distinct churches, one vicarial, the other rectorial; a question not to be settled by any off-hand judgment. In most churches no such question could possibly arise, but here there is the singular anomaly of a Rector and a Vicar of the same church, a custom which has existed from the beginning of the 14th century,[1] and still continues.

It may be necessary to explain that a *sinecure Rector* is not the same as a *lay-Rector*. A lay-rector simply means that the great tithes of the parish belonged, say to some monastery, and on the dissolution of monasteries were absorbed by the Crown and granted to anybody, layman or spiritual person, as the Crown pleased. The sinecure Rector must be in orders just as much as the Vicar, and is instituted by the Bishop and inducted by the Archdeacon or his deputy just as the Vicar is.

The Rectory has never been absorbed by the Crown, any more than the Vicarage, but both before and after the Reformation the two benefices have gone on side by side in the same church, not uncommonly in the same hands, but oftener divided, the Vicarage in early times being in the gift of the Rector.

The origin of this curious anomaly has not been exactly traced, but appears certainly to be connected with this arrangement of a double church, already described. The north chapel, founded for the tenants of Northcourt or North

[1] A Vicar was instituted by the Rector, Richard Le Brun, to the vicarial chapel (vicariæ capellae) de Shorewelle. Bishop Woodlock's Register (1305-16).

Shorwell, being served from Carisbrook Priory, and the south chapel, founded for the now growing parish, and especially the manors of Westcourt, or South Shorwell, and Wolverton, was served by a Vicar. In 1547 George Marbury was instituted on the nomination of Richard Grove, to whom the advowson had been let by the Rector, Richard Reynolds, *ad vicariam ecclesiæ parochialis* [not de Shorwell but] *de Suthshorwell.*[1] Here at any rate is *prima facie* evidence of the church of *South Shorwell* being a parochial church by itself.

Going back again to the structure, is there then any trace of alteration or enlargement in Edward III's. time, which we should expect, if the church were then really made parochial? There is nothing of late Decorated work in the Church, but the fine east window of the north aisle is of a character transitional between Decorated and Perpendicular, having straight lines in the head, but the mullions not being carried up direct through the tracery as is the case in true Perpendicular windows,[2] and I would suggest that this window, which is of about the date 1360-1380, or the end of Edward III's. reign, was inserted, probably in place of a double or triple lancet east window, when the oldest part, the Northcourt aisle, was first joined with the parochial aisle to the south of it, as part of the parish church of Shorwell. The good decorated cross, now on the central gable, was, before 1848, as appears from Sir Henry Gordon's drawings, on this north gable.

We come next to the great period in the history of the church, about the middle of the 15th century, when it was almost wholly rebuilt on a larger scale, very nearly as we see it to-day. The nave was now extended westward, the south wall of the two-aisled church was pulled down, making the south aisle into a nave, and a new aisle was built to the south of this, also under a separate roof, and of equal length with the others, thus giving to the church its present singular plan of three equal aisles (though *aisle* is of course not a strictly correct word), with no external distinction between nave and chancel in any of the three. Each of these three

[1] Bp. Gardiner's Register; Stone, iv., p. 163.

[2] The lower part has been reconstructed, and the mullions do not fit the head.

aisles or naves had its own chancel and altar, the steps to which still remain in them all. The parish was thus at last provided with a chancel of considerable size, and the date of this reconstruction we may put at about 1440, partly from the evidence of the piers and arches, which are of plain solid middle Perpendicular work, showing no trace either of the transitional work of an earlier date, or the debased details of a later one, and partly from the independent witness of the great wall-painting of S. Christopher, which is assigned to 1440, and was probably painted while the walls were fresh and raw-looking.

To this church only three additions appear since to have been made; (1), the large window in the south wall, which may be dated about 1500, and was probably a memorial window, perhaps to one of the De Lisles (John de Lisle died in 1500), intended for a display of stained glass, and is remarkable for the somewhat rare fact of ornament outside in the spandrils; (2), the south porch, which is dated on the key-stone 1771, and is of the plain round-arched type of that date (the north porch is apparently of the same date as the rest of the church); and (3), by far the most important, the tower and spire, which form a conspicuous and beautiful object in every view of this lovely village from its surrounding hills. We may assume that the tower and spire were the latest part of the great rebuilding, because early builders almost always worked from the east, the essential part, towards the tower, which was a glory and a luxury. This is borne out by the details, the lower stage of the tower being vaulted exactly like the tower of Carisbrook, which has the date, 1470, cut upon it. This tower is one of the group, perhaps all built by the same master-hand, which includes all the principal towers of the Island, except Brading; namely Carisbrook (the finest of all), Gatcombe, Godshill, Chale, and the old church of Newport. From its comparative shortness it may have been intended from the first to bear a spire, but its inaccessibility has prevented me from ever examining it to settle this point. With Mr. Stone, I agree that the spire is Jacobean work, probably due to the great building impulse given in the parish by Sir John Leigh, whose fine tomb is in the north aisle; and there is a remarkable confirmation of

this in the brass weathercock that surmounts it, which bears on its tail the date 1617, two years after Sir John Leigh had finished his new mansion of Northcourt.

Here then we have traced from first to last, as far as cautious conjecture from certain evidence will allow, the whole history of the structure. The remainder of our task is to glance at the history of the church furniture and other possessions, for which Shorwell is remarkable.

THE FONT.

The Font stands by the first pillar of the south arcade. Its date is easy to fix as being of the period as the arcade itself. Its mouldings, almost the same as the capitals of the pillars, were, no doubt, by the same workmen. The font cover, now surmounted by a Holy Dove, but originally, perhaps, only by a knob, has this inscription—"And the Holy Ghost descended in bodily shape like a dove upon him, Luke 3, ve. 22." This cover, like the pulpit canopy and the spire, is probably due to the gift of Sir John Leigh; if so, its date would be about 1620. The font-ewer, rather a remarkable one of Belgian work, I had the pleasure of giving to the church, in 1890.

THE GUN CHAMBER.

The chamber enclosed at the end of the south aisle, now used as a vestry, is of singular interest, being, as far as I know, the only example still in existence. There were somewhat similar chambers formerly at Brighstone and my other church of Mottiston,[1] but in both cases these were external, on the north side of the tower, and so have perished; while this at Shorwell, being under the actual church roof and an integral part of the structure, has survived. An arch, now filled in, in the west wall, under the window, was the entrance for the gun, with a separate door from the outside, now blocked. The chamber was separated from the church either by a wooden screen, as it is now, or by a low wall, but of this no traces are to be found. The gun itself survived till comparatively recent times, when it was

[1] The Mottiston one, in ruins, appears in Tomkins' print of the Church 1794.

sold, doubtless by the churchwardens, and probably was melted up. The late parish clerk, who died recently at the age of 80, having held office for over 40 years, told me that it was a brass piece, and I think, but am not quite sure, said that he had seen it. If it still survives, it would be of unique interest, and worth any effort to recover for its historical position.

While at the west end it is worth while drawing attention to the tall graceful windows, of unusually slender and acutely-pointed form for Perpendicular date, which terminate the aisles,[1] having a fit centre in the similar, but much shorter, window under the tower. It is owing to them, I imagine, that the west front—a singular and noteworthy composition for a village church—has been described by a hasty observer, copied by most guide books, as of Decorated date. The upper part of a good deal of the tracery of all three seems to be original, but has been much tampered with, especially in the lower cusping. And here, when examining the church, together with Mr. Stratton, the architect, I made a discovery which throws light on a statement in Barber's "Picturesque Illustrations of the Isle of Wight," about 1835, that a square-headed two-light window bears in raised stone figures the date 1523. Having searched all the square-headed windows in vain, on examining the west window of the north aisle, outside, we found in stone, nearly crumbled away, the date, not 1523, but 1623, showing that this again, like so much of the church furniture, has found the restoring hand—one of extraordinary taste and judgment for the date—of Sir John Leigh, of Northcourt. How much of the tracery is of this unexpected date it would need a close examination to show; but it is obvious that he must have followed with a fidelity, rare at that time, the remains of the fine Perpendicular tracery.

THE PULPIT.

The pulpit is of great singularity, and to its position in the nave is due the remarkable appearance of the church

[1] This slender sharply-pointed form in Perpendicular windows is chiefly associated with the work of William of Wykeham, and its best known examples are those of his two colleges at Winchester and New College, Oxford.

to anyone on first entering it, from the necessity of placing most of the central seats east and west, thus giving it the resemblance to a college chapel. This remarkable pulpit was obviously made when the arcades were built, one of the piers being built in two separate sections, with a space between for an entrance staircase from the aisle, and its date[1] may safely be put, therefore, like the arcade, as *c.* 1440.

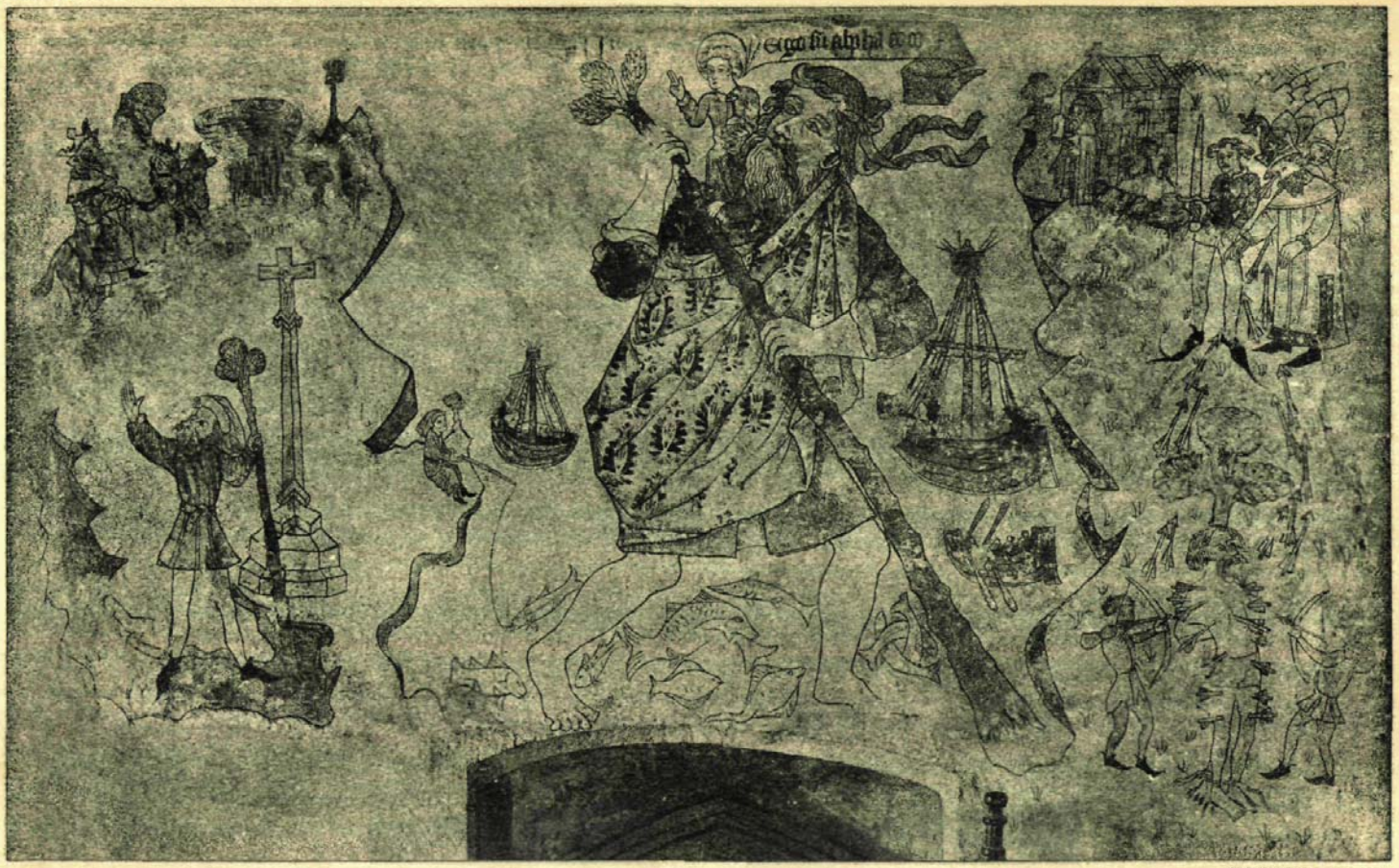
Besides its singular form, this pulpit has two appendages deserving notice—its canopy, and its hour-glass stand. The canopy, a good example of Jacobean carving, has the date 1620 cut on the lower spandrils, and may therefore be assumed to be another gift of the generous Sir John Leigh. The iron hour-glass stand is also Jacobean, and possibly also his gift, though it may be somewhat later. The hour-glass now placed in it I procured from Mr. Walford, the well-known art dealer at Oxford. I think he said it came from some Buckinghamshire church.[2]

THE ALTAR, &c.

The altar-table is a fine though small slab of very dark oak, set on very inferior legs which do not belong to it. On the centre panel it bears the date 1661. I have been told that it was given by a former vicar, Mr. Robertson. The central chancel has a plain shelf or credence, while the south chancel, which served probably as the Wolverton chapel, has a piscina on the south side.

[1] Mediæval stone pulpits are rare, the idea of a fixed pulpit for preaching at all being of comparatively late date. The pulpit in Beaulieu Abbey, far more ornamental than this, is a Decorated work, but as the present church of Beaulieu was the frater or refectory of the Abbey, this was *not* a pulpit *for* preaching but *for* reading at meals. The best known examples in England, those of Shrewsbury Abbey and the outer court of Magdalen, Oxford, are out-door pulpits, and therefore not exactly parallels. Somersetshire is pre-eminently the county for them, and retains at least nine examples, but they are very rare in every other county. There was, however, formerly one other in the Island, at Chale, the base of which, precisely similar to the base of this one, is now lying in the grounds in front of Chale Rectory, where it ought to be more carefully preserved.

[2] There was another hour-glass stand in the Island, on the pulpit os Yarmouth, which is now in the possession of Mr. Butler. It if much to be hoped that it may eventually return to the church.



THE WALL-PAINTING.

We will now turn to another well-known treasure of this church, the great wall-painting of S. Christopher over the north door. Popularly this, like all wall-paintings, is spoken of as a *fresco*, although ancient frescoes are almost unknown out of Italy. They were painted by a totally different process, the colours being as the name implies worked into the surface of the wall while it was *fresh*, whereas in England the picture is painted either on the wall itself or on the hardened plaster. The medium here used was probably not *tempera* of any kind, such as a blending with size or fig-juice, but water-colour, which here as often has proved the most durable of all materials.

The painting is more distinct than it was a few years ago, but it has in no way been "restored," a process which often means the destruction of all interest in works of antiquity. What has been done was mainly to complete the uncovering from the plaster which was begun at the restoration of the church in 1848, by a careful use of a penknife and fine tooth-brush, and then simply to wash the existing lines in weak China ink and water,—analogous to the cleaning of an oil painting—and this was skilfully and carefully done by Mr. Stone. The subjects are (*a*) the Saint riding in Company with the Devil, who has the pointed ears of a Satyr, and wears a peculiar crown; (*b*) the renunciation of the service of the Devil, and enlistment in that of the crucified Christ, marked by the miracle of the blossoming staff—both these are on the dexter side; (*c*) in the centre, the great figure of S. Christopher bearing the infant Christ, out of whose mouth proceeds a label, *ego sum alpha et omega*, the last word given in the Greek character. The Saint is bearing the child across a river towards a small hermitage or chapel, at the door of which a hermit is standing with a lantern; and (*d*), on the sinister side, the martyrdom of the saint with arrows, like S. Sebastian, while above stands a tyrant having a crown on, probably representing the Emperor Decius, in whose persecution, *c.* 250, A.D. the Saint is traditionally said to have been martyred, or possibly his Asian Proconsul, with an arrow entering his eyes. An executioner stands in front of him bearing a sword with which, on the failure of the arrows to kill him, the Saint

was at last put to death. Many of the details deserve notice also, particularly (*a*) the picturesque adjuncts, to some of which it is perfectly futile to attach a symbolical meaning, such as for example making the man fishing to be the devil catching souls; (*b*) the curious answering signals between the crow's nest of the ship and the beacon-station on shore; (*c*) the great variety of fish, of fresh and salt-water kinds together, pike and skate swimming side by side; and (*d*) the three fishes combined, which are clearly emblematical of the Holy Trinity.

There is so great a difference between the drawing of the principal figure with the Holy Child and the accessories that Mr. Stone is perhaps right in conjecturing that a master-hand may have painted the former, and only directed or sketched the latter. The colours employed are black, yellow, green, and brick-red. Sir John Evans, late President of the Society of Antiquaries, judging from the costumes and weapons, fixes the date at about 1440, and as this precisely falls in with the date I have for certain reasons assigned for the building of the Perpendicular church, we may take it that the painting was made almost as soon as the plaster was hard, and probably before the practically new church was consecrated.

There was formerly another painting, over the south door, representing the Last Judgment. This subject is almost invariably placed over the chancel arch, but here there is no arch. The account in Mr. Stone's 3rd Part (corrected, however, in a note) of the deliberate destruction of the painting, because of the nude figures, was given me by a lady who heard it from Mrs. Robertson, the widow of the vicar at the time of the restoration. I am informed however by Lady Mary Gordon, whose late husband, Sir Henry Gordon, a famous scholar, artist, and antiquarian, almost entirely directed and carried out the restoration (a work done with extraordinary skill and care for its date, 1848), that this reproach against the responsible authorities is entirely unfounded, and that every effort was made to preserve this valuable relic, but that, owing either to some disturbance of the wall, or possibly to a different medium having been employed, this painting flaked off on the removal of the plaster,

while that of S. Christopher stood firm, as I trust it will yet do for many generations.[1]

THE BELLS.

The ring of bells in the tower consists of three only. When the sign of the village inn is "The Bells," it is generally an index to the number, but though here the inn is called the "Five Bells," that is probably borrowed direct from Brighstone, without meaning, as there were apparently never more than three.[2] They are all of the 17th century, like so much of the church furniture, the inscriptions being:—

2nd—"Geve thanks to God, 1601." R.B.
Tenor—"Geve God the glory, 1611." R.B.
Treble—"IH God be our gude, 1641," in Lombardic lettering.

THE MONUMENTS.

The sepulchral monuments, are varied and important. Most of the inscriptions are quaint, but are too long to be given in full here. First come the *brasses*.

The Brasses.

The oldest is that of Richard Bethell, Vicar, 1518, now set, for its preservation, in the tiled floor in the centre of the chancel.[3] He is dressed in a long gown with full sleeves, and a hood or scarf fastened to the left shoulder by a brooch or clasp in the form of a rosette.[4] The inscription is in English, and the name of the parish is spelt *Sher*well.

[1] A painting at Whitwell, very probably by the same hand, also perished soon after its uncovering, but owing to the happy accident of its being traced by Mr. Barraud, who was at work on some stained windows at the time, its design has been preserved, and appears in Part I. of Mr. Stone's book. There was also a wall painting certainly at Chale, and possibly in other churches, so that it seems probable that an artist, one of no mean skill, was at work in the island about the middle of the 15th century.

[2] Since this Paper was read, the sign of the inn has come to a near prospect of fulfilment, Lady Mary Gordon having offered one new bell and Mrs. Leith another, in memory of Sir Henry Gordon and General Leith, while the parish is raising over £100 for the re-hanging in a proper modern framework of the old bells, so as to make a ring of five that can be rung, not merely chimed. The work will be by Mears and Stainbank.

[3] It was removed from a slab on the north side, where the matrix of it is visible, the slab having been economically used by the widow of a later Vicar, John Godsall, 1732, to commemorate her husband.

[4] The brass is figured in Haines' Manual of Monumental Brasses (i, p. 78)

The Two Wives of Barnabas Leigh, 1615-1619.

At the east end of the north aisle, over the place of the first altar, is the very curious brass to the two wives and the children of Barnabas Leigh, son of Sir John Leigh, the builder of Northcourt. The first wife, Elizabeth Bampfield, who died 1615, is followed by a train of no less than 10 sons and five daughters, necessarily much squeezed together, while the second wife, Gartrude Percevall, who died in 1619, had no children, and has to be compensated with Latin texts, such as—"Sing, O thou barren," and "Am not I better unto thee than ten sons?" Underneath are twelve lines of verse to commemorate the virtues of this

> "Sweet saint-like paire of soules in whom did shine
> Such modells of perfection fæminine."

Elizabeth Leigh, 1621.

On the east wall of the south aisle is a brass bearing on the dexter upper corner in a shield, the arms of Leigh impaling those of Elizabeth, wife of Edward Leigh, and daughter of Francis Helton, of Portsmouth, who died 1621, and the opposite corner, in a lozenge, which is always used for the arms of maids and widows, the lady's own coat of arms and an inscription in capitals, ending with ten English verses. The stone shield on the opposite side of the window with E. L. and the date, 1569, is for Edward Leigh, not, as Mr. Stone suggests, for Edward Lisle, of Westcourt, this being shown by the Leigh arms.

THE STONE MONUMENTS.

Sir John Leigh and his Great-Grandson, 1629.

By far the most important of the monuments in the north aisle is that of Sir John Leigh, the builder of Northcourt and the founder of the island branch of this family, which derives, I believe, from Somersetshire. The knight in armour, with sword (broken), and wearing trunk hose and a ruff, is kneeling at a faldstool, and behind him, curiously imitating his attitude, is an alabaster figure, not affixed to the stone, of a little boy, on a circular pillar which probably is not original.

This boy is Barnabas Leigh, son of John Leigh and Elizabeth (Bulckly), his wife, who died at the age of nine months, when his great-grandfather was lying dead, and was buried in the same tomb, 1629. It is a very interesting example of infantile costume. The inscription was written by Sir John's son, Barnabas, the husband of the two wives in the brass, who seems to have prided himself on his powers of composition. The tomb is often called that of the "little page," from the four most frankly Pagan verses with which it ends,

> "Inmate in graue he tooke his grandchild[1] heire,
> Whose soule did hast to make to him repair,
> And so to heauen along as little page
> With him did poast to wait vpon his age."

It is remarkable that the figures are facing westwards, with their backs to the altar. The explanation I suppose to be that the tomb was originally designed for the south chancel aisle, but that after the figures were made it was decided to place it here, where it blocks the lancet window before mentioned.

The other monuments may be passed over more rapidly. At the east end of the north wall is one which retains a good deal of its colouring, to the memory of Elizabeth Leigh, wife of Sir John Leigh, of Northcourt, and daughter of Sir John Dingley, of Wolverton, and thus connected with both the great manor-houses of the parish. She died 1619, and the rather curious verse inscription is no doubt by her son, the before mentioned Barnabas Leigh. Above is a marble table to John Leigh, 1688, great grandson (I believe) of Sir John, and Anna, wife of his son, John, 1719. In the south chancel floor is part of a slab to Mary Bull, 1706, which I rescued from serving as the doorstep to a cottage. An excellently carved low form of headstone, mostly dated about 1700, occurs frequently in the churchyard, and is worthy of note (there is one good example close to the south porch). A red cross of Peterhead granite, commemorates my predecessor, Bishop M'Dougall, the first Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak (died 1887), and close to it is the beautiful coped tomb, in gray Aberdeen granite, of Sir Henry Gordon.

[1] He was really *great*-grandson.

The moveable possessions of the church, its sacramental plate and ancient books, are also valuable and interesting.

THE CHALICE.

The chalice[1] is a silver cup of the Elizabethan type, with two delicately worked bands of carving, and the date, 1569, on the central ornament of the lid, which forms its foot when used as a paten. The year, 1569, is a very common date, owing to the appointment then by Queen Elizabeth of Commissioners to see that churches were properly supplied with needful furniture.[2]

BOOKS.

The first Register book of the parish is unhappily lost, so that the Registers only begin from 1676, but on the other hand we have the Churchwardens' Accounts from the singularly early date of 1580. An interesting fragment of a service book is stitched as a cover to the Churchwardens' Accounts of 1580-1598. It consists of two pages of parchment or vellum, with illuminated capitals, and music notation in the old church unbarred style. I sent a copy of the words, as far as I could decipher them, to the Dean of Winchester, who sent them to Canon Bright, the Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford, and from him I received the explanation that it is the office for the 21st Sunday after Trinity in the Sarum Use, containing (1) the *officium* or introit, mostly from Esther xiii., 9-11; (2) the Psalm, cxix., 1; (3) the Gradual, "The Lord is our refuge, &c." (4) the Gospel, of the Nobleman's son; (5) the offertory, "There was a man named Job;" and (6) the "*Communio*," said after

[1] Many guide books have an elaborate description of a silver Renaissance paten, engraved with figures of Adam and Eve and emblematical devices, as belonging to this church. It is a curious proof how slavishly most guide books do their work, that there never was any such paten here at all. Mr. Robertson, the Vicar, had a silver salver of this description which he bought in Italy, and on the occasion, I believe, of a harvest thanksgiving he used it as a alms dish, when it happened to be noted and described by some one whose account was quite enough for the innumerable tribe of guide book makers ever after.

[2] Nearly all the dated ones I remember in Lincolnshire, the county with which my antiquarian studies have been chiefly connected, are of this year.

the Priest's communion, of certain verses from Ps. cxix, most of which is the same also in the Roman, York, and Hereford Use.

THE CRANMER BIBLE.

Last of all we come to the latest addition to the treasures of the church, which at the same time is one of its earliest possessions, the Cranmer Bible of 1541, the first Bible which the church owned, formerly chained to a desk, as the rivets in its massive binding show, and now chained in a glass case in the north aisle. When I came to the parish I found this Bible in the keeping of the Jolliffe family of Yafford House, with whom it had been for many generations. I never ceased to urge the duty of restoring this to the church, to which it unquestionably belonged, as two entries in it show, "The Booke of Shorwell Church" in one place, and "Liber iste ad ecclesiam Shorwelli pertinet," in another. By an act, which though only just was none the less both generous and graceful, the family of the late Mrs. Jolliffe agreed to restore it in memory of their mother, giving at the same time the admirable stand on which it now rests, which was designed for me by the Librarian of the Bodleian at Oxford, and I formally received the Bible back into the keeping of its ancient home on Easter Day, 1892.

The Bible is in remarkably good preservation, a fact which adds greatly to its very considerable value. An old pupil of mine at Haileybury, Mr. R. F. Sharp, of the Printed Book Department of the British Museum, happened to be here the day after it was set up again in the Church, and kindly sent me the following report:—"Your Bible appears to be the 3rd edition of the Cranmer Bible, the two earlier editions being dated April, 1540, and July, 1540. It is very rare; a copy in average condition is valued at from £50 to £70 and upwards, according to its perfection and freedom from mutilation. A perfect copy was sold in 1854 for £121." The title-page was probably, but not certainly, designed by Holbein. It represents King Henry distributing Bibles to a vast number of people, out of whose mouths comes the label "Vivat Rex." Two seals appear on the title-page, one of which is left blank, while the other bears the arms of Arch-

bishop Cranmer. The blank seal points to the extremely interesting fact that between the design and the issue of the book, Thomas Cromwell, under whose auspices, together with Cranmer's, the Bible was to have been issued, had fallen into disgrace, and his seal was consequently erased. Cromwell was beheaded July 28, 1540.

It will thus be seen that the possessions of this church are varied, remarkable, and in some respects unique, and that the inhabitants of this beautiful village have every reason to take a pride and an intelligent interest in the details of its history. This feeling, their Vicar is most earnestly desirous to foster in every way, and in this spirit he offers this contribution to the story of a parish which affords so many beautiful and interesting links, and not in its church alone, with the history and the piety of the past.

Thanks are due to Mr. Percy G. Stone, F.R.I.B.A., who has kindly furnished a ground plan of the church, also a drawing of the wall painting for the illustration of this paper.