



<http://kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/archaeologia-cantiana/>

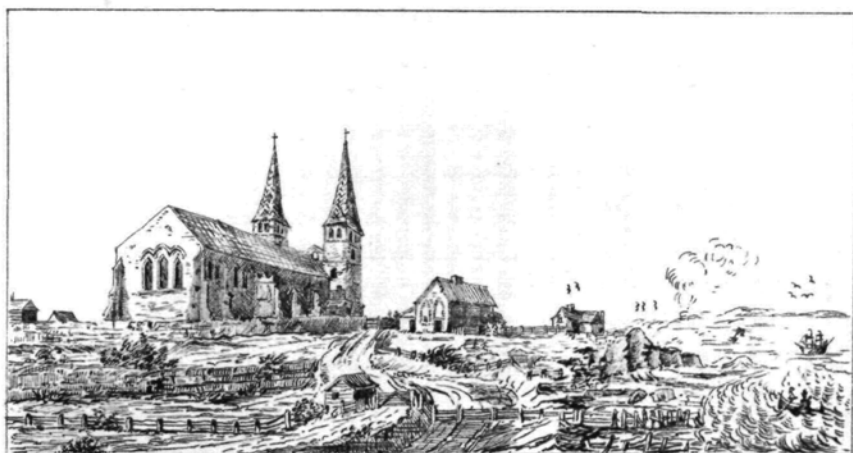
Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society

RECVLVER CHURCH.

BY GEORGE DOWKER, ESQ., F.G.S.

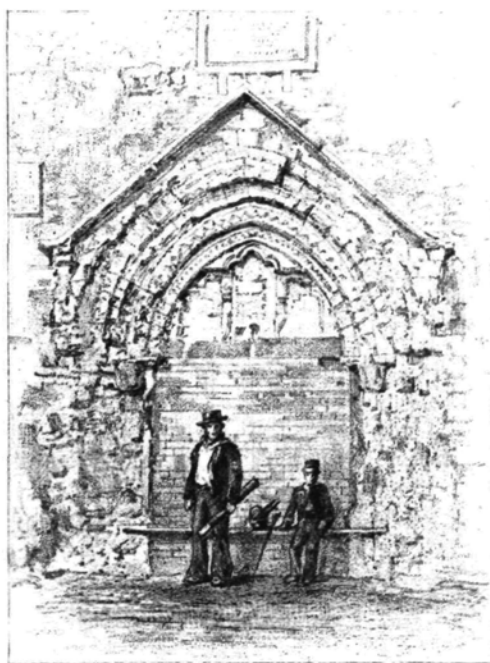
IF in our examination of the Castrum at Reculver we derive little assistance from historical data preserved to us, such is not the case with the Church; in its immediate connection with the Roman period, however, little guide is vouchsafed us. When the Romans finally left Britain, it is probable that the inhabitants had so learned their customs, and adopted their manners, that but little difference might be perceived in their buildings, etc. They were serfs, left without their lords and masters, but these were soon forthcoming in the warriors they invited over to protect them from their numerous enemies. The Saxons who thus came as their protectors were soon their masters. The Britons had thus but changed one set of masters for another. Religious belief, their customs and manners, appear to have been soon altered. It appears but a fair inference, that they still clung to their former strongholds, and the Castra which had been built to repel invasion were still used for a like purpose. Through this succession of dark and troublesome times we have few facts to guide us; but at a later period the introduction of Christianity, and the spread of knowledge and civilization, leave us in possession of historical data of the greatest possible interest. Around this spot are grouped, either by tradition or document, a host of witnesses, bringing



RECVLVER CHURCH, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH EAST IN 1781.



RUINS OF RECVLVER CHURCH, VIEWED FROM
THE NORTH WEST, A. D. 1877.



WEST DOORWAY OF RECVLVER CHURCH, A. D. 1860.

us back in its history to the remotest period. It is not my purpose in this paper to trace it out in all its minuteness; this task has been most ably accomplished by others, and I would refer my readers more especially to the Rev. John Duncombe's history, published in the *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*.* In order, however, to render my account a connected history, and the better to draw your attention to those points still obscure, or on which some light may even now be shed, through careful research and examination, I furnish the following summary of events connected with it.

According to tradition, Ethelbert first Christian King of Kent was buried here. Mr. Green, incumbent of this parish in 1695, mentions that an inscription in old English records this event.†

Weever says,

"At the upper end of the south isle in this church I saw a monument of antique forme mounted with two spires, wherein (as the inhabitants have it by tradition) the body of one Ethelbert, a Saxon King who hath his pallace royal here in Reculver, lieth entombed. But whether he be this Ethelbert the 2nd, or Ethelbert surnamed Præn, that lieth here interred, it is not much material, for they bothe dyed without any memorable act."—*Funeral Monuments*, p. 260.

Whatever value we may attach to this statement, it is pretty certain that Ethelbert after resigning his Palace at Canterbury to St. Augustine retired here. According to the *Historia Monasterii S. Augustini Cantuariensis*, King Ethelbert was buried in the Monastery of St. Augustine, in the *porticus* of St. Martin.

Kilburne states,‡ "Ethelbert the first Christian

* *Bib. Top. Brit.*, No. xviii., 1784, p. 62. † *Ibid.*, p. 125.

‡ Kilburne, *Survey of Kent*, p. 222.

King of Kent, about 1060 years since, built a palace here for himself and successors." I can find no confirmation of this statement. It is not improbable, however, that it may have some basis. Ford House was the most ancient seat belonging to the see of Canterbury, being given to it by Ethelbert King of Kent, who resided the latter part of his reign in Reculver. This palace is about four miles distant, and in Ethelbert's time might be considered a part of Reculver. It is probable that he retired here.*

Next we find :—

"According to the Saxon Chronicle 669 (*circa*) King Ecbyrht gave Raculf to Bassa, a mass priest, to build a minster upon. A.D. 679, Hlothari, King of Kent, granted land in Westney, in the Isle of Thanet, and twelve houses at Sturry, to Abbot Bercuald and his monastery. A.D. 747, a charter of Eadberht, King of Kent, granting to the church at Raculfe, and to Deneheah and his monks, the toll and custom of one vessel at the port and town of Fordwich. A.D. 747 (*circa*) a grant by Eardwulf, King of Kent, of land in Berhamstede to the Abbot Eadberht and his monks, living in loco qui dicitur Raculf.† A.D. 784, a grant by Ealhmund, King of Kent, of a piece of land called Scildwic to Abbot Westrede and his monks at Raculfcestre. A.D. 811, a charter of Archbishop Wulfred, giving lands in Eosterege to Reacolvensæ ecclesiæ. A.D. 825, a charter of Archbishop Wulfred restoring to the monasteries the possessions of which they had been deprived during the violence of the times. This charter was made at the Synod of Cloveshou. A.D. 949, grant by King Eadred of Monasterium Raculfense cum tota villa to the church of Canterbury." . . . ‡

* I have examined Ford, and find early foundations of compact masonry in which *Roman* tiles are introduced, though most of the present walls appear to have been rebuilt to the foundations (I give this merely as a conjecture), but the masonry in the foundations of these walls is wonderfully like that in the earliest part of Reculver church.

† Quoted by C. R. Smith, p. 221.

‡ Given *in extenso* in Roach Smith's *Reculver*, with translations by W. Sandys.—*Reculver*, p. 222.

We have thus during the Saxon period many notices of the Church and Monastery, and it remains for us to discover if any portions of the fabric of that date are remaining. It is probable that during the ravages of the Danes, Reculver suffered, with the other monasteries in Kent; but, though the monastic buildings may have been destroyed, a church of more than ordinary note appears in the Norman period to have existed here.

In the book of taxations of ecclesiastical livings made in 1281, it is mentioned that the Church of Reculver had these chapels annexed, viz.: Hoathe, St. Nicholas, All Saints, and Herne, and it is probable that they had been so annexed many years previously. In 1296 occurs a decree of Archbishop Winchelsea, dated Reculver, concerning the oblations and alms in a certain chest, near the *great stone cross* between the church and chancel at Reculver.* It would thus seem that the cross mentioned by Leland was at this date in the Church.

From the Norman period we have notices of the Church bringing us to the Early English period, to which I would now briefly direct attention.

In 1351 a Thomas Nyewe de Wotton,† rector of Aldington, being vicar of Reculver, for the perpetual discharge of himself and successors from officiating in the cure of Hoath, and for furnishing the burghers with a constant and resident priest, founded in Hoath chapel a perpetual chantry, to be served by a resident priest; he likewise founded one at Reculver in honour of the Holy Trinity. Another chantry was founded

* Letters from Mr. Green, by Ducarel, from manuscript in Lambeth Library.

† Ducarel, *Itinerary*, p. 118; *Topographica Britannica*, p. 119.

in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for a chaplain to pray for the soul of Alicia de Brooke, and the souls of all faithful people deceased for ever.* Both these chantries were suppressed in the second year of King Edward the VI's reign.

With the data furnished above we have to add the description given of the Church itself and its various monuments at different times. First of these I would place that given us in the Itinerary of Leland, for many reasons the most important, and as I would direct special attention to this, I will quote it at length. Speaking of the Church he says:—

“At the entrance to the choir, was one of the fairest and most stately crosses that ever I saw, a ix footes as I ges yn hight. It standeth lyke a fayr columnne. The base greate stone ys not wrought. The second stone, being round, hath curiously wrought and paynted the images of Christ, Peter, Paule, John, and James as I remember. Christ sayeth, ego sum Alpha & Ω. Peter sayith, Tu es Christus filius dei vivi. The saying of the other iii wher painted majusculis literis Ro., but now obliterated. The second stone is of the Passion. The iii containeth the xii Apostles. The iiii hath the image of Christ hanging, and fastened with iiii nayles, and sub-redibus sustentaculum. The hiest part of the pyller hath the figure of a crosse. In the chirch is a very auncient Boke of the Evangelies, in majusculis literis Ro., and yn the bordes therof ys a christal stone thus inscribed: Clavdia . Atepiccvs. Yn the north side of the chirch is the figure of a bishop paynted under an arch.”†

In Philipot's time the Church was full of solitude and languishing into decay.

Weever,‡ besides mention of the monument supposed to be that of King Ethelbert before mentioned, relates that within the communion rails in the Chancel is a handsome monument representing “Sir Cavalheur

* *Ibid.*, 157.

† *Itinerary*, vol. vii., p. 136.

‡ Weever, *Funeral Monuments*.

Maycote and Lady Maycote with their eight children A.D. 1586." Sir Cavalier Maycote lived at Brook in this parish, where is a curious red brick gateway which I suppose to be of this date. Brook belongs now to Mr. J. Collard, to whom I am indebted for the loan of the curious old map before referred to.

On a flat stone in the chancel were two brass figures (engraved in the *Bibliotheca Topographica*), with this inscription :—

" Hic jacet Johannes Sandewey armiger et Johanna uxor ejus ;
quorum animabus propitietur Deus. Amen."

On a brass plate against the south wall with a herald's coat (see engraving in *Bibliotheca**), the following, viz. :—

" Here under quit from wordly miseries
Ralph Brooke esquire, late York Herald, lyes.
Fifteenth of October he was last alive,
One thousand Six hundred twenty and five.
Seventy three years bore he fortune's harmes,
And forty-five an officer of Armes.
He married Thomasin, daughter of Michael Cobb, of Kent,
Serjeant at armes, by whom two daughters God him lent.
Surviving Mary, William Dickin's wife,
Thomason John Exton's. Happy be their life."

The above stone with inscription still legible I found in Hilborough Church.

In the chancel was a large flat stone with the following inscription :—

" Hic jacet dominus Thomas . . . qui . ob . . .
Vos qui transitis Thomam deflere vetitis
Per me nunc scitis quid prodest et gloria ditis."

This stone I have likewise found in Hilborough churchyard.

Hasted gives descriptions of several other monu-

* *Bib. Top. Brit.*, p. 85, fig. 6.

ments and a drawing of the Church.* Another drawing of the Church is found in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, May, 1809 (by J. Pridden, taken April, 1781). Two views are given in Mr. Freeman's little book on *Regulbium* published in 1810. Two views are found in Deeble's *History of Thanet*, published in 1817, one of these shewing the pillars at the entrance to the chancel standing.

A notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1809, furnishes the following particulars relating to the Church:—

“At the ends eastward of the north and south aisles, are two portions, 14 feet 2 by 9 feet 2, which are partitioned off, and have been shut up many years, which evidently were oratories or Chantries; as in the northern, is remaining a handsome *piscina* and a cupboard for the pix: In the other a *piscina* only. There were doors of access to each of these from the chancel, but they have been so long closed up, that there was no remembrance of the chantries by the oldest inhabitants.”

There are but few notices of the Monastery buildings. Leland relates, “The whole precincts of the Monastery appeareth by the old walle; and the vicarage was made of the ruines of the Monastery: There is a neglected chapel out of the church yard wher sum say was a parish church, or the abbay was suppressed and given to the bishop of Canterbury.” Mr. Boys's plan shews three of these.†

In 1850 Mr. Roach Smith published a work on the *Antiquities of Richborough, Reculver, and Lymne*, in which he gave an exhaustive account of all that related to the Roman portions of Reculver, and first drew attention to the peculiar construction of the chancel pillars and arches, which he described as of

* Hasted's *Kent*, folio, vol. iii., p. 636.

† *Bib. Top. Brit.*, plate iv., p. 84.

Roman work. He was not, however, aware of the circular apse at the east end. Subsequently these columns were discovered by Mr. Sheppard, and are now in the Canterbury Cathedral precincts.*

The wanton destruction of the Church by the vicar and parishioners has been commented on by various contributors to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, but the following description in the writing of the parish clerk, and found among the parish papers, and for which I am indebted to the vicar of Hoathe, is unsurpassed; I give it in its own language and spelling. It begins with some notes taken in 1805 and following years.

"1805 Reculver Church and Village stood in saftey; 1806 the sea begun to make a little incroach on the willage; 1807 the farmers begun take up the seaside stone work and sold it to the Margate Pier Compney for a foundation for the new peir, and the timber by action, as it was good oak fit for their hoame use, and than the willage became a total rack to the mercy of the sea."

Oct. 13th, 1802. "The Chapel house fell down." (*Here some connecting remarks are wanting*). "This been all dun and spread abroad, the people come from all parts to see the ruines of village and the church. Mr C. C. nailor been Vicar of the parish, his mother fancied that the church was keep for a poppet show, and she persuaded har son to take it down, so he took it in consideration and named it to the farmers in the parish about taking it down; sum was for it and sum against it, than Mr nailor wrote to the Bishop to know if he might have the church took down, and is answer was it must be dun by a majority of the people in the parish, so hafter a long time he got the majority of one, so down come the Church.

"for it, Mr Nailor, vicker, Mr Tom denne, Reculver, Mr W. Staines, Brooke, Mr Tom Fix, hilbrow.—Against it, Mr W^m Brown, Reculver, Mr Step. Sayer, Bishopstone, Mr Brett Clark to the old church 40 years.

* See communication to Society of Antiquaries, read April 11, 1861.

“The last tax that Mr nailor took was these words, Let your ways be the ways of rightness, and your path the peace, and down come the church, and whot wos is thoats about is flock that day no one knows.”

In 1809 the Trinity Board purchased the Church to preserve as a sea-mark. The materials were sold to different persons, but a considerable portion was used in building a church at Hilborough near here, and that church being now in progress of rebuilding, I have been enabled to identify many portions which had been removed from Reculver, and thus can give a more perfect description of the original Church.

The above sketch of the various historical data which I have laid before you, will prepare you for much interest in the examination of the ruins of this Church.

I will now proceed to describe its present state, and hope to shew you from a careful examination of the walls, aided by the excavations into the foundations, that sufficient materials remain to enable us to part reconstruct this most ancient Church, and to trace its various periods of restoration.

I should not omit to mention that there is a legend which ascribes the building of the two towers of the Church to the Abbess of the poor nuns of Davington, who, as she with her sister was proceeding in fulfilment of a vow from Faversham to the chapel of the Virgin at Broadstairs, was wrecked at Reculver, where her sister died. The church towers are said to have been built in memory of the event, and as a warning and guide to mariners. The Priory of Davington was founded in about 1156. It is probable that there is some basis for this statement, as the architectural features of the towers would agree well with that

date. It is stated with regard to the chapel of the Virgin at Broadstairs, that it was held in such veneration by the sailors that they dipped their sails when passing it.* A beacon existed in the field to the westward of the Church at Reculver, and its importance as a sea-mark is recognized by the care taken of it by the Trinity Board. Since 1810 they have erected groins and faced the cliff next the Church with stone; they have likewise enclosed the Church with a fence, and thus prevented further desecration. That the means they have adopted have been most effectual is witnessed by the stationary state of the sea cliff since that date. The two towers which are used as sea-marks have claimed their chief attention, the buttresses have been repaired with brick and the western door blocked with the same.

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CHURCH.

The north wall of the aisle is standing from five to seven feet in height. Some compact masonry at right angles to the wall marks the entrance at the north porch, probably of Norman date.† In this wall are several insertions, probably at the Early English restoration, and most of the buttresses are of this date. One in the centre both of the north and south aisles blocks an opening in the original wall which must have been doorways (D).

I have classed these outer walls as Norman; the foundations of them may have belonged to an earlier church. Roman tiles have been built in indiscriminately, as if removed from some earlier Roman buildings; but these tiles are likewise built into the Early

* Hasted's *Kent*, vol. iv., p. 363.

† I have called them Norman, probably part of them is of Saxon build.

English walls and the windows turned and faced with the like tiles. Probably some of these were of Roman date. The remains of the earlier buttresses are seen, and were not so deep as the later ones, and appear to have had rounded faces. Mr. Boys gave a drawing of the arch and lintel of a Norman door, part of which I found at Hilborough. (See fig. 4 in *Topographica Britannica*, p. 85.)

The north and south walls of the aisles did not originally reach to the extent of the present ones, the last five feet on either side being a later addition, probably belonging to the two chantries before mentioned of Thos. Nyewe de Wotton, A. D. 1351 (xx).

The chancel was separated from the nave by two pillars (A A), described by Mr. Roach Smith and Mr. Sheppard,* the foundations of these pillars I traced. On either side of these, the walls are of very compact masonry, and have bonding tiles of Roman brick (fig. 1, B B in plan), 2 feet 6 inches thick. The walls of the chancel were pierced on either side for doorways, and the chancel terminated by a semicircular apse, down the foundations of which I dug and exhibited its Roman work. (See fig. 2.) It was three feet in depth, the lower portions consisting of squared stone and flint 2 feet 8 inches wide, on this three layers of Roman tiles, the whole being imbedded in very compact mortar or concrete; the portion composed of these tiles was six inches narrower than the lower portion. This semicircular apse merges into the side walls of the chancel, and in the latter at the corners, where pierced for doorways, the same Roman tiles are used alternately with flint stone, forming bonding courses. The doorways were 3 feet 2 inches in width,

* *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. III, p. 136.

Κεραυρα Αθήναι.
 SHEWING THE ROMAN, NORMAN, AND EARLY ENGLISH
 RESTORATIONS.

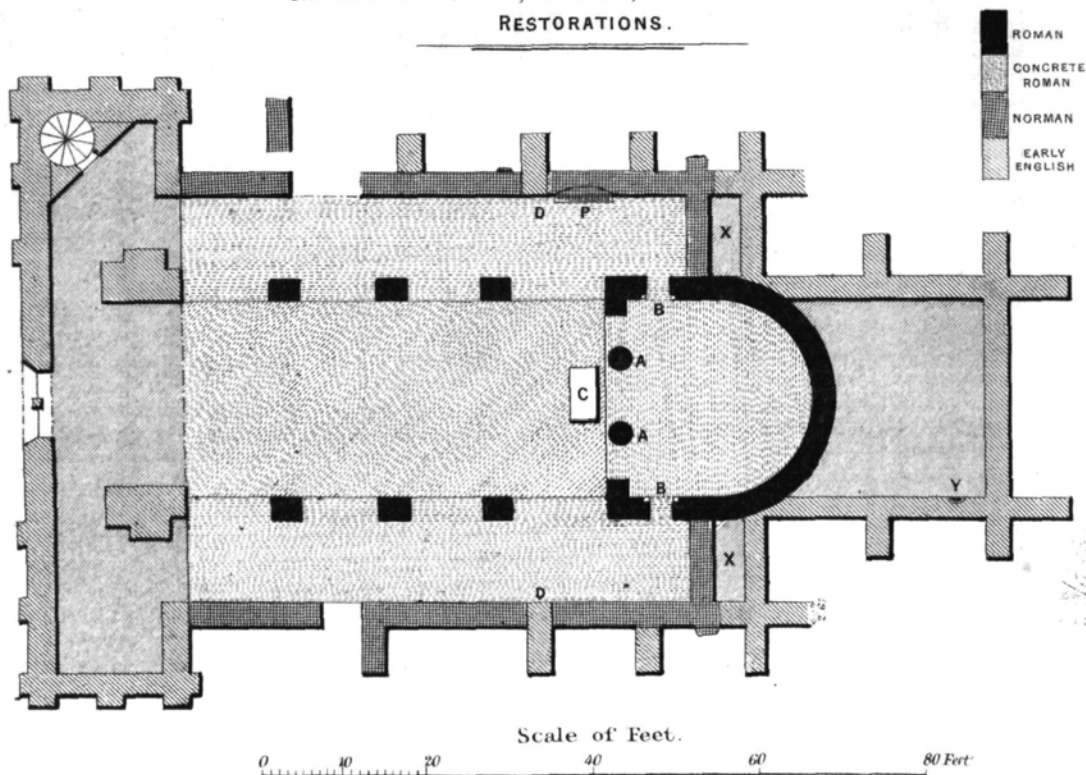
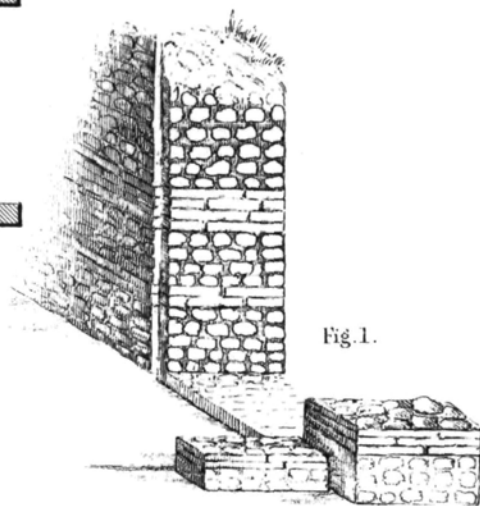


Fig. 2.
 SECTION WALL OF APSE.



S. E. WALL OF CHANCEL.

Scale of Feet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 Feet

and rabbited or grooved for timber apparently. The Roman tiles or bricks are some of them 16 inches in length and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in thickness, others 11 inches in length. It will be remembered that Mr. Roach Smith figured and described the pillars which separated the chancel from the nave, which had been turned with three circular arches of Roman tiles. These pillars were found by Mr. Sheppard, and are now placed in the Precincts of Canterbury Cathedral. I found the foundations of them. These pillars have holes cut in them as if to admit iron or wood work.*

The chancel, as far as the semicircular apse, is paved with a remarkable concrete floor, consisting of a basis of boulders overlaid with mortar like that used in Roman work, but faced with red pounded tile, the surface of which appears to have been polished, the thickness exceeding six inches. A similar concrete floor extends over the nave as far west as the towers, and also into the side aisles, not reaching however to the eastern terminations of them by 5 feet 5 inches. This concrete floor is $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches higher in the chancel than that in the nave; that in the side aisles being $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches higher than in the nave. This floor is apparently bounded by the outer walls. In the plan accompanying this, I have distinguished the floor of concrete by different shadings; also I have shewn the Roman, Norman, and Early English walls, distinguished by different shadings. Just in front of the central arch, leading from the chancel into the nave (in the latter), I found the foundations of what appears to have been the cross mentioned by Leland. It is 7 feet by 3 feet 3 inches, and appears built of fragments of stone, some of which is coarse oolite.

* See *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. III, p. 136.

The concrete floor does not look as if it had been cut to receive the foundations, but laid round them (c).

Parts of the original walls of the chancel are seen standing about 6 feet in height, and 2 feet 6 inches in width, built with very compact masonry, with regular layers of Roman tiles ; these older walls extend to the commencement of the circular apse (about 10 feet) westward. Both north and south walls are marked by additions of later date, perhaps Early English. In the north wall a portion has been cut away to receive a monument (see plan p), a portion of the canopy of which I found with red paint on it, and I have little doubt but that it is that referred to by Leland, where he writes "yn the north side of the chirch is the figure of a Bishop paynted under an arch." I may add that I saw portions of a monumental effigy in Hilborough churchyard with similar paint, probably removed from this spot when the church was dismantled. I can find no other mention of this monument, which was probably concealed beneath high pews. In this wall are the remains of several windows, one which I measured I found to be deeply splayed at an angle of 10° at the sides, and 30° at the bottom, the sides being formed of Roman tiles. The south walls had similar windows ; a portion of this wall extends partly beneath the western towers, and is terminated with regular bondings of Roman tile. The interior of the early church must have been at least 62 feet from east to west ; the width of the nave 24 feet, the length of the aisles 56 feet with a width of 11 feet. At the eastern end, the Church has been added to by continuing the side walls of the chancel beyond the circular apse 17 feet. This was probably done at the Early English restoration. These walls are not so

well built as those of the remaining parts of the chancel; and though they contain Roman tiles, these are not built in in any regular manner. The chancel thus enlarged was 46 feet by 23 feet, and the floor appears to have been raised so as to cover the Roman floor and the circular apse walls, and to have been paved with encaustic tiles, some having fleur-de-lis patterns. The east end of the chancel wall is now standing, portions being (I should estimate) at least 20 feet in height, and there remains the east window, which appears to have been encircled with a canopy embracing the whole, and it was ornamented with Purbeck shaftings standing free from the window. Portions of these shaftings are in Hilborough churchyard. In this wall are stones from some earlier building, and a remaining portion of a piscina or stoup I observed in the wall under the east window. In the south wall of the chancel, near the east end and at a level with the ground, a curiously cut step-like stone is inserted, perhaps a drain for a piscina (see x on plan). A large vault exists at the east end of the chancel. I am informed by Mr. Holmans that this vault is circular, and has coffins disposed round it in a circular manner.

The remaining portions of the Church which have escaped destruction consist of the unique western towers. They were added, I believe, at the period of the Early English restoration, perhaps about the twelfth century. These towers close the north and south aisles, and project beyond them, and are joined by a western front having a total width of 64 feet. In the centre of this front is a fine doorway (shewn in our first plate) divided into two by a central shafting. These towers are 63 feet in height, and are surmounted with wood-

work, now used to support large vanes, and employed by the Trinity Board as sea-marks. The towers are not placed quite centrally with the chancel, the north wall of which cuts a line south of the north-west buttress of the tower, the southern wall cutting near the centre of the south-east buttress. The towers have three mouldings set off, and in each are eight windows with trefoil heads. In the belfry story are four openings of rather peculiar construction. The west front is pierced with two large similar openings, between and over which is a circular opening. The wall of the west front is pierced from tower to tower, so as to connect them by a narrow gallery; under this the remains of two circular windows are to be seen.

In excavating near the south-eastern corner of the churchyard, we discovered the foundations of a building about twenty feet square, one wall of which constitutes the outer wall of the churchyard, and though Roman tiles are used in it, I imagine it to be of mediæval date; these walls rest upon foundations of earlier walls crossing them diagonally; these may have been remains of the old Monastery; but we did not trace them further than the rectangular building before mentioned. Mr. Boys, in his description of the Church published in 1783 in *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*, gives drawings of three double windows which were in the south wall of the chancel of rather peculiar construction. The same plate gives the arch of the north door (portions of which I have found in Hilborough church), also the large westernmost pillars of the nave, which were 8 feet by 15 inches.

* *Topographica Britannica*, Reculver, p. 83.

From figures and descriptions we gather that this was an imposing church, having a simple grandeur and peculiar construction. There are points about it which appear to me of the deepest interest. Who were the original builders? Mr. Roach Smith came to the conclusion some years ago, from inspecting the plans and drawings of the chancel pillars, and inspection of masonry, that they were of Roman workmanship.* The discovery of the pillars by Mr. Sheppard has enabled us to examine them. At a late meeting of the Archæological Institute at Canterbury I asked Mr. Parker if he had any doubt of their Roman workmanship, and he replied that he had not. In Sir Gilbert Scott's history of the Church within the Castle at Dover (supposed to be of very early date), he states: "Other portions of the stone are of a very peculiar kind of coarse oolite, and it is a curious fact that the same stone has been found at St. Mildred's Church at Canterbury, which has been supposed by Mr. Hussey to contain old Roman materials, and that the curious pillars from Reculver are of the same stone."† I have found the same sort of oolite at Richborough; and lately I have inspected with Canon Jenkins portions of similar stone that formed part of the Basilica at Lyminge: indeed, the stone found there is very like a portion of a similar pillar from Reculver. I do not know how far we can attach importance to the peculiar oolite as indicative of Roman origin; but the occurrence of this material in buildings presumed to be of Roman work is very significant. Then, again, the peculiar concrete floor is pronounced by Mr. Roach Smith, from a recent ex-

* *Antiquities of Richborough, Reculver, and Lymne*, by C. R. Smith, p. 197.

† *Archæologica Cantiana*, Vol. V, p. 9.

amination, as decidedly Roman. This circumstance is of great importance. The pillars might have been removed from some pre-existing building, not so the concrete floor; moreover, the latter is bounded by the older present walls, with which they seem coeval, or at least some parts of them. The position of the Church within the Roman castrum is where we might expect to find the prætorium. Is this Church a Roman basilica, or was it built after that pattern at a later date? Archæologists have of late years almost ignored the remains of Saxon architecture. I have, in deference, marked the walls bounding the concrete floor as Norman; but my conviction is that they are prior to that date. A very voluminous correspondence appeared in the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1863 and previous years between Mr. Parker, of Oxford, Canon Jenkins, and Mr. Dimock, originating from a description given by Mr. Jenkins of his church at Lyminge, Mr. Parker contending that before the tenth century churches were mostly built of wood, and that no examples remained of stone churches before that period, except debased Roman work. He describes the masonry of churches at this period as that of the rudest possible character. The existing church at Lyminge, excepting a part of the south wall, Mr. Parker considered as one of the eleventh century. He referred to the fact that—

“Every one of our cathedrals was rebuilt in the twelfth century; there is not a *vestige* of Saxon work in any one of them. Lanfranc's Cathedral at Canterbury was entirely pulled down and rebuilt by Ernulf and Conrad in the time of Henry I. Why? excepting that it was either so small or so badly built, that it was not worth preserving.” Further on Mr. Parker observes, “that the Roman art of building, which was chiefly of *bricks*, gradually decayed and died out in England; there was then an interval during which

nearly all buildings were of wood or of rough stone without mortar; then a revival took place, and the earliest buildings erected after this revival were built of the fragments of Roman buildings, and the Roman buildings copied as well as unskilled hands could copy them." "Also he observes that the monks of almost every monastery in Western Europe had become skilled masons before the tenth century is entirely an assumption of Mr. Jenkins'. *They built very substantially, with very thick walls, and their lime being burnt on the spot, the mortar was so strong, and the grouting after became a grouting work, etc.*" (Here Mr. Parker seems to contradict himself.)

I have merely here alluded to this theory of Mr. Parker's, because his authority has generally been accepted. But, having read all the correspondence, I consider Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Dimock had the best of the argument, which went to prove that many remains existed of buildings of the sixth or at least seventh century—certainly earlier than the eleventh. But in a letter written to the *Archæological Journal*, Nov. 22, 1877, Mr. Parker recants; he writes:—

"But the truth must be acknowledged that to call the style of architecture by the names of the centuries, though very convenient, and in the main correct, is sometimes misleading. The width of the joints is a useful distinction between early and late Norman buildings; but a large proportion of the buildings of the eleventh century in England are not Norman, and the distinction does not apply to *Anglo-Saxon* buildings. Formerly, it is true, I did not acknowledge that there was any *Anglo-Saxon style*, but I am not ashamed to acknowledge that further observations during the last forty years have made me see that this was an error, though the best informed people of that time agreed with me, and considered all these *pre-Norman* buildings as debased Roman only."

We may then, without doing violence to the best authorities, consider whether we may not here have *Saxon work*. Canon Jenkins informs me a very close relationship existed between Reculver and Lyminge, and, I presume, Canterbury,* and we may fairly assume

* See *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. III, p. 19.

that the details of buildings of early date in these places may throw light one on the other. Professor Willis has made us acquainted with the Saxon church at Canterbury.* Canon Jenkins has explored the Saxon church at Lyminge,† and I hope to shew we have here another example.

From Willis we learn the Saxon cathedral—first the work of the Romans—was recovered to Christianity in 602; enlarged by Odo A.D. 950. Odo's church was built after the plan of the ancient Basilica of St. Peter's at Rome; as reconstructed by Willis it had a semicircular apse at the east as well as west ends. He remarks:—

“Now although the large Basilicas at Rome have transepts, yet in the lesser ones the building is a plain parallelogram, of which the aisles extend from end to end, and the divisions of the church are made out upon its floor *by steps and partitions*, but do not shew themselves in the external form.” (P. 27.)

The resemblance at Reculver is here striking; we have a division of choir and aisles by steps. An altar is represented at the east end and before the front of the presbytery. At Reculver we have indications of an altar in the latter place, where afterwards was the cross mentioned by Leland. Again there appears to have been a side passage from the presbytery to the side aisles as in Reculver, probably intended for processions.

At Lyminge, on the south side of the Church, Mr. Jenkins has exposed a semicircular apse, which appears to have been separated from the nave by circular pillars like those at Reculver, and to have had a narrow aisle, part of the wall of which appears built

* *Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral*, p. 27.

† *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. X, p. ci.

into the present Church. The circular apse next the Church appears as the termination of one of the side aisles of a much larger Basilica than that at Reculver; I am inclined, however, to consider the latter probably of earlier date than the former, the material and size of walls differing.* If I might hazard a conjecture, I should say one of the aisles of a large Roman Basilica had been reconstructed into a Saxon church. However this may be, the narrow aisle is a peculiar appendage to a building so large as that at Lyminge. Willis states it was a part of the policy of Augustine, acting under the advice of Pope Gregory, not to destroy the heathen temples, but only the idols therein; and to consecrate their buildings to Christianity.† This was probably the case at Reculver, and when we consider the connection of Reculver with the Christian King Ethelbert's palace, it appears the more likely. How far Christianity was established in this country before the advent of Augustine is a disputed point, but it is not at all unlikely that even during the Roman occupation, some converts existed in this country, and Augustine is likely to have first visited those parts where some Christians were established; where indeed so likely as in the Castra on the eastern coast.

Another interesting circumstance connected with this Church was the curious cross described by Leland as standing on a base of unwrought stone. I have little doubt but that the foundations I found at the entrance to the chancel, between the pillars, were the

* Canon Jenkins informs me that it was the opinion of Lord Talbot de Malahide that Lyminge apse belonged to a building in the fourth or beginning of the fifth century.

† *Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral*, p. 30.

base of an altar on which the cross subsequently stood (see plan c). The position of this altar is that indicated in the instructions delivered to the Jews to be placed before the veil of the temple, as in Solomon's temple, and the heathen temples appear to have had the altar similarly placed. A fresco painting at Pompeii thus represents it, the sacrificing priest standing before the altar and facing the people.

In conclusion, it appears to me there are points in the construction of this Church of the deepest interest to the antiquary, and much in Reculver calling for further research. I have but imperfectly shadowed forth the leading features. I hope my humble endeavours will induce abler hands to take up the subject.

I cannot conclude without expressing my thanks for the able assistance given me by Mr. F. Slater; to Mr. J. Collard for the use of his curious map; to the Rev. W. B. Brown for his assistance; to Canon Jenkins for the aid he has given me in the historical portions; and to Mr. C. Roach Smith for his advice and assistance.

G. DOWKER.

STOUMOUTH, *Jan.* 1878.