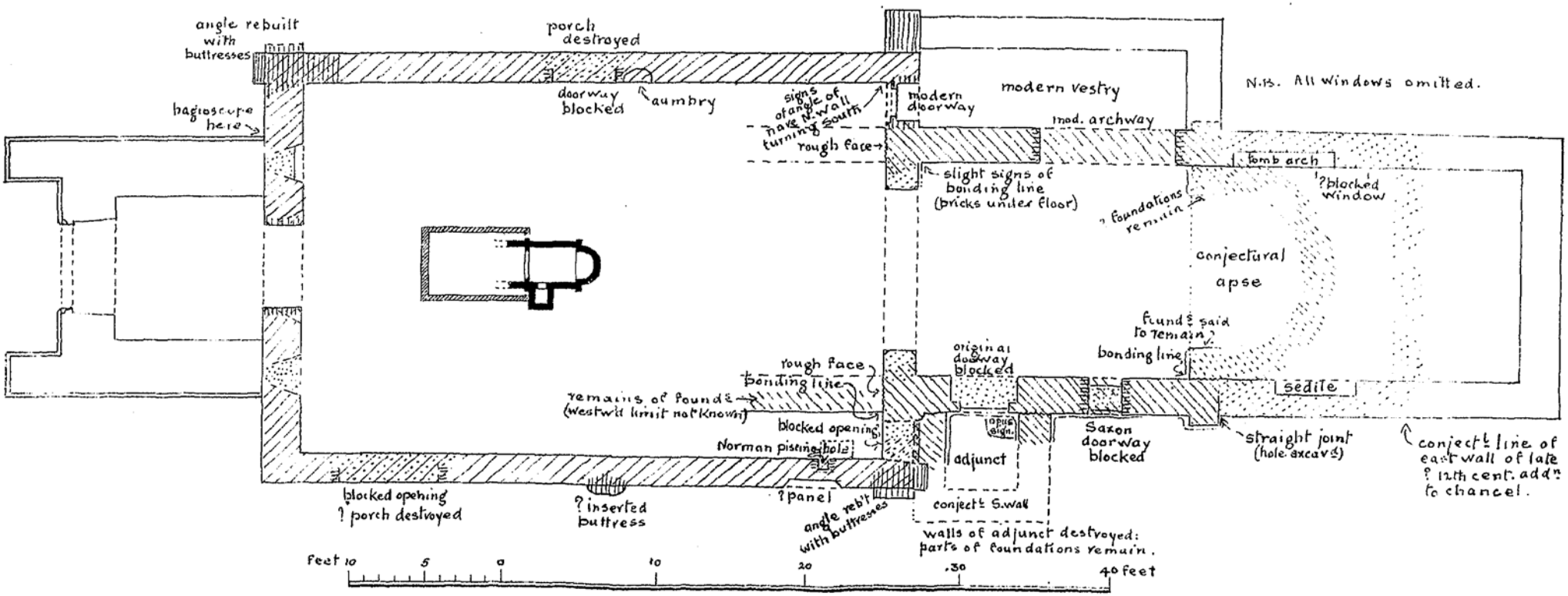


St Martin's, Canterbury.

G. M. L. mens. et del., 1896.

Archæologia Cantiana.

ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

BY THE REV. CHARLES F. ROUTLEDGE, F.S.A.

RECENT explorations have once more directed our attention to the history and structure of this remarkable Church. If only a little more care and thought had been bestowed upon it during preceding centuries, not only would the present generation have been saved a vast amount of difficult and perplexing controversy, but the building itself would not have suffered from unsuitable restoration, or been exposed to partial decay and the destruction of countless interesting features.

As it is, no systematic record of the Church's annals has come down to us, no description of its internal arrangements save what can be inferred from the casual wills of parishioners before the Reformation, no entries respecting its history in the Registers or Churchwardens' Accounts—I might almost add, no trustworthy picture, for the old prints, from the seventeenth century downwards, are extremely fanciful and inaccurate. So far has this process of silence been carried out that even the extensive restorations made fifty years ago under the guidance of Mr. Daniel Finch and Canon Chesshyre have not been recorded. They were apparently executed without any faculty from the Archbishop, and no papers are extant shew-

ing their nature or details. We owe indeed to these benefactors a debt of gratitude, for without them the Church would perhaps have become, within a reasonable distance of time, what Mr. Ruskin calls an "interesting ruin."

Though we may naturally express our indignation and surprise at such neglect of the cradle of English Christianity, we may (as archæologists) derive some consolation from the fact that there is thus left to us so much new material to discover, so much scope for individual opinion and ingenuity, so many points of controversy upon which we may enter untrammelled by the crushing weight of positive authorities in the past, speaking of what they knew, and testifying of what they had seen.

The present writer endeavoured a few years ago to collect the scattered fragments of allusions to the Church that occur here and there in various documents, and to describe some of its architectural and antiquarian details so far as they then appeared. But much of his History was written in the dark, because many circumstances at that time prevented exhaustive investigation.

Happily, with the kind consent and cordial assistance of the Rev. L. J. White-Thomson, the present Rector, a series of explorations has lately been carried out; and, without recapitulating various features of interest in the Church that have been for some years familiar, I propose in this Article to give a brief account of the results of these recent discoveries, premising that I do so with the conviction that fresh light may any day be cast upon them. A more complete examination has been rendered possible by the removal of the plaster from the walls of the Nave, and

also from the lower portion of the Chancel walls to a height of nearly 8 feet.

And first with regard to the *West Wall* of the *Nave*.* Rugged and uneven as it now looks, there is still method in its building. Its general character is that of roughly hewn Kentish ragstones (with occasional blocks of chalk) bonded together by Roman tiles, arranged in sometimes a single, sometimes a double or even a triple course. Here and there a single course of stones lies between the courses of tiles, which are then 9 ins. apart. In other portions of the wall five or six courses of stones intervene between the courses of tiles—so that the courses of stones and tiles do not alternate regularly. The original face of the wall is much obscured by sundry patchings and repairs, and by the erection of a monumental tablet on the N. side. In the centre over the present doorway is an *Arch* or opening—now filled up with courses of Roman tiles and rubble of chalk and flint. The Arch reaches to a height of 17 ft. or 18 ft. above the floor level, a few inches of the crown having been cut away, and is on an average 7 ft. 2 in. wide. Whether it reached originally down to the ground, or was merely an opening of the nature of a window, cannot be positively stated, as the fillings-up have not yet been removed. On either side of the Arch, at a distance of 2 ft., are two *Windows* (the upper 18 ins. of which, as they now appear, are an extension made in Saxon or Norman times). The original windows (below this extension) have their jambs of chalk-blocks filled in with *white* mortar, while the arches are turned in

* The accompanying Photograph is reproduced by the courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

Roman tiles and rough voussoirs of Kentish ragstone with interstices of bright *pink* mortar.

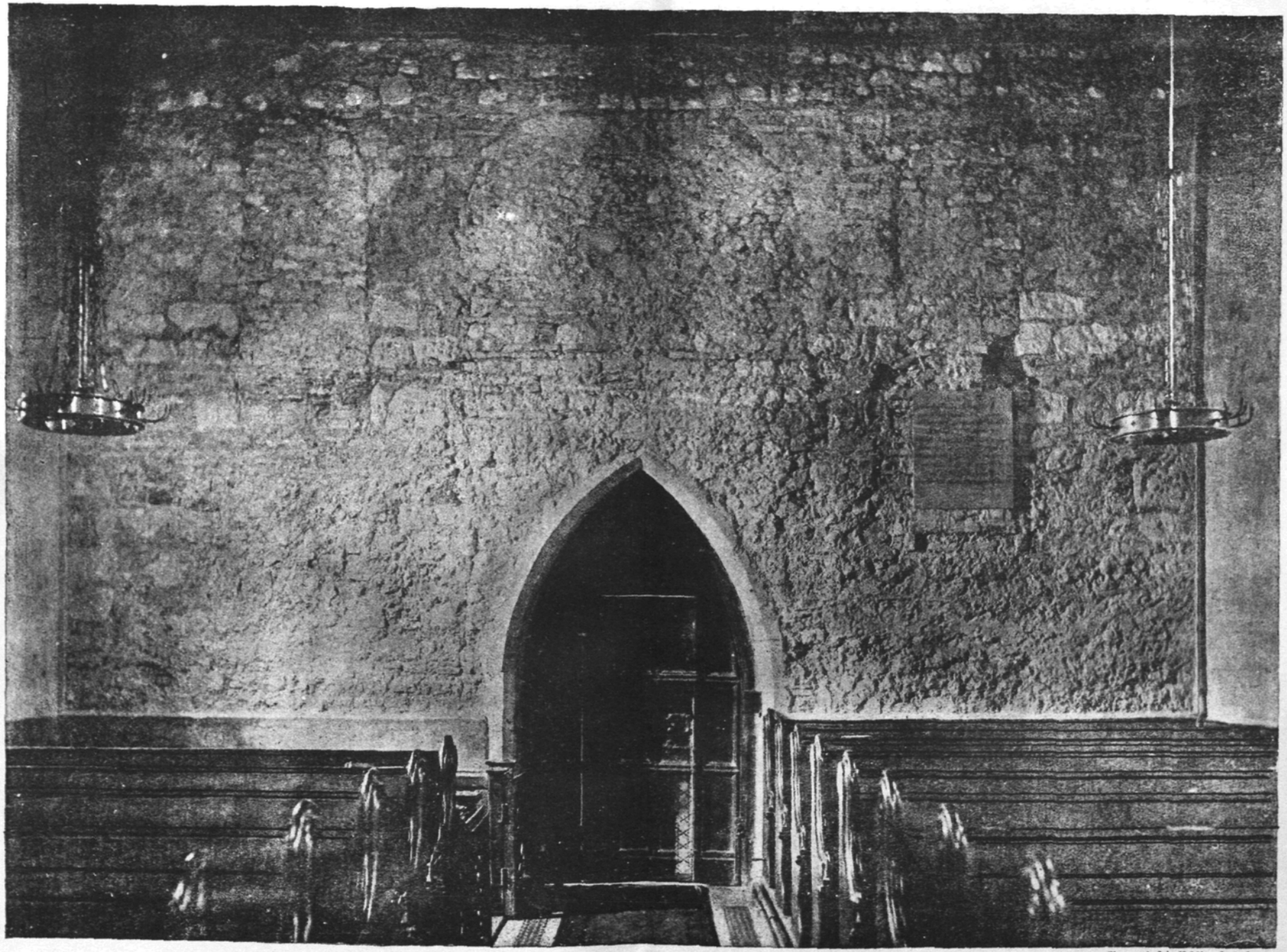
These windows are certainly built *more Romano*, and no sufficient evidence has yet been brought forward to upset the opinion strongly held by many antiquarians—that they are *Roman*. They are 2 ft. 8 in. wide, and would have measured 4 ft. from sill to crown. Their jambs are splayed at an angle that would allow about 12 ins. for the actual opening on the outer face of the wall. Their sills are respectively 9 ft. 9 in. and 10 ft. above the ground level; and the lower portion of the South Window is filled up with thin mediæval tiles.*

The *extended* windows were undoubtedly blocked up when the tower was built in the fourteenth century. Their heads have no voussoirs, but were cut out of the original walling, and simply plastered. Near them are portions of pink plaster still adhering to the wall.

Excavations were made below the northern portion of this Western Wall in hopes of finding some of the original flooring of the Church, but could not be further prosecuted because vaults and even detached skeletons were met with at a distance of no more than 1 ft. below the existing pews.

In the same corner, partially covered by the N. Wall of the tower, there has been exposed by the removal of the woodwork the Norman squint or *lychnoscope*, the sides of which are formed of worked chalk and Kentish rag, with traces of a hinge and receptacle for a bolt, while the lintel is composed of a piece of oak greatly decayed by age. This lychnoscope is partially splayed on both sides, rather more to the S. than the N. side, the actual opening mea-

* *Cf.* Sketch.



Photographed by H. Collis, Canterbury.

WEST WALL OF NAVE, SHEWING CENTRAL ARCH.

AND ROMAN (?) WINDOWS WITH LATER EXTENSION UPWARDS.

suring 12 ins. by 8 ins., lined with plaster—and it commanded apparently a view of the High Altar, which was dedicated to St. Martin.

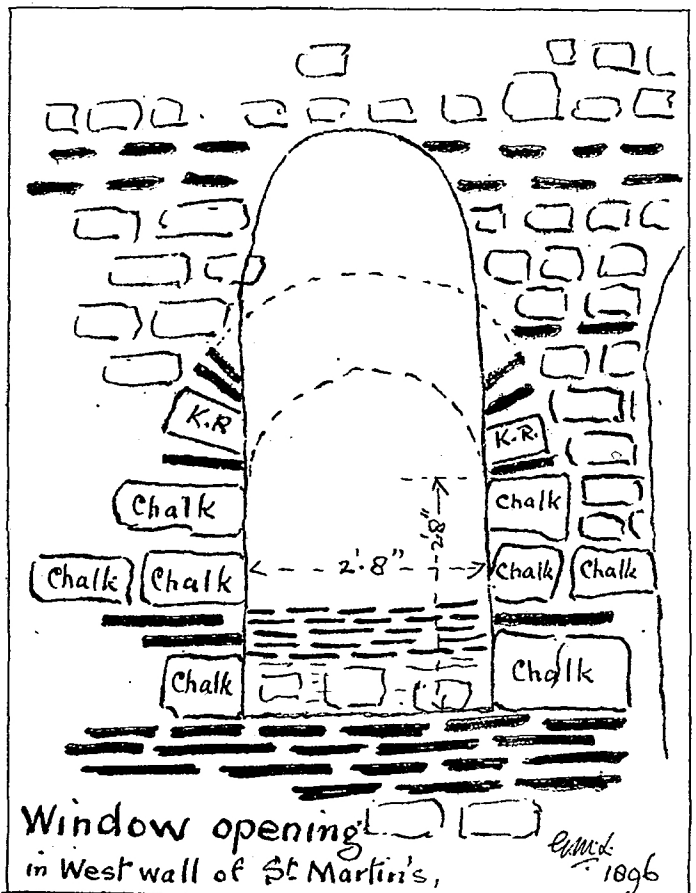
The style of the N. and S. Walls of the Nave is much the same as that of the Western Wall, and behind the woodwork are considerable pieces of pink plaster, remarkable both for its hardness and texture. It is composed of carbonate of lime imperfectly burned, of silicious sand, and pounded Roman tile, in almost equal proportions. The subsequent imitations of this plaster, occasionally found in Saxon, Norman, and even Early English buildings, are distinguishable from it by the greater preponderance of sand. About the middle of the N. Wall is a *doorway*, 4 ft. 2 in. wide, with jambs of Caen stones of irregular size, some of them shewing axe-tooling. The date of this doorway is a matter of controversy. The head is destroyed and the rubble filling-in irregular, but the general appearance seems to me to favour the theory that it is *Norman*—and it is probable that in the restoration of the Church at the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century there was added the Early English porch, which was only removed some sixty or seventy years ago. On the E. side of the doorway is a *stoup* for Holy Water, conjectured by some to be coeval with the existing wall, and certainly of great antiquity. The shape is irregular, but it may be described roughly as measuring 20 ins. by 17 ins.

On the removal of the flooring at the S.E. corner of the Nave, near the Norman piscina, *the foundations of a wall* were discovered running parallel to the S. Wall of the Nave, from which it is little more than 3 ft. distant. These foundations, chiefly consisting of

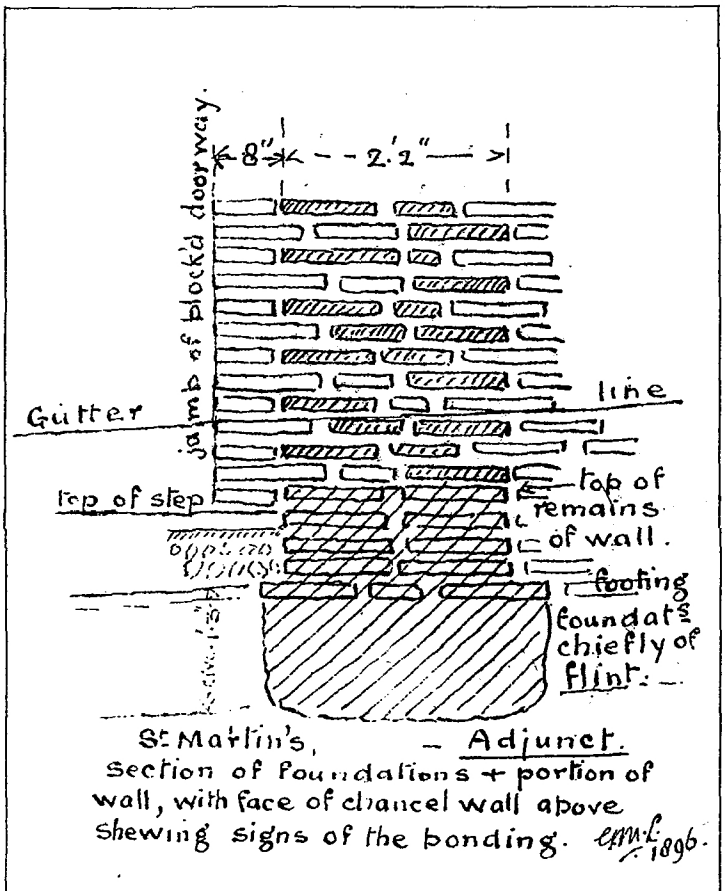
flint, are about 18 ins. wide and 15 ins. deep, but they are in parts extremely fragmentary, and they *may be* connected with the parclose of the Altar of St. Nicholas, which formerly stood in this portion of the Church.

The Rev. G. M. Livett, however (who has paid very great and careful attention to the Architecture of the Church, and to whom I am indebted for many valuable suggestions and corrections in this Paper), has opened out another possibility. He writes to me as follows:—

"The portion of the east wall of the nave, into which the south respond of the chancel arch is bonded, is similar in character and material to the brick walling of the western part of the *chancel*, with which, therefore, rather than with the *nave*, it must be identified in date and construction. The same may be said of the corresponding bit of wall on the north side, which, however, has been more interfered with by the bondings of later work. In the face of the bit of wall on the south side, though rough and plastered with hard cement, may be detected the broken bonders of a wall that formerly ran westwards from it, and exactly in a line with the south wall of the chancel. The vertical line of the junction of the southern face of the destroyed wall with the bit of wall under examination can be traced quite clearly. It has all the proper signs of bonding, precisely similar in treatment to the signs of bonding seen on the face of the south wall of the chancel immediately above the foundations of the Adjunct which you fortunately discovered by excavation. [To be described hereafter.] The foundations which you found under the flooring of the nave are in a position to have carried this destroyed wall. According to your description,



Window opening in West wall of St Martin's, 1896



St Martin's, – Adjunct.
Section of foundations + portion of wall, with face of chancel wall above shewing signs of the bonding. 1896.

though they are fragmentary, their material and depth correspond exactly with the foundations of the chancel wall below the brick footings thereof. I drew Mr. W. H. St. John Hope's attention to the signs of bonding which I have described, and from recent correspondence with him I infer that he accepts the evidence as sufficient to prove the former existence of a destroyed wall. The recovery of this wall, running in the direction described, and contemporaneous in date with the western part of the chancel, is an important factor in the consideration of the relative dates of the existing chancel and nave—a consideration which so far has not yielded a unanimous opinion among archæologists, and which, therefore, I will not now discuss."

At the same level as these foundations, and immediately beneath the *piscina*, is a hole measuring 2 ft. by 1 ft. 8 in., and 5 ins. deep, with a flooring of rough concrete—the object of which is at present uncertain.

In the N. and S. corners of the Nave, about 6 ft. distant from the jambs of the Chancel Arch, and 10 ft. above the ground, are the holes made for the insertion of the *Rood-beam*, on which burned "the Light of the Holy Cross," to which frequent allusion is made in the wills of parishioners before the Reformation.

Let us now proceed to the *Chancel*. The whole of the modern stalls were temporarily removed with a view to facilitating further investigations underground; but here, as in the Nave, the excavations were almost entirely put a stop to by the existence of vaults and graves extending right up to the walls on either side.

Owing to various circumstances it has not been considered advisable for the present to strip the

plaster from the Chancel Walls above the height of 7 or 8 ft., or east of the Altar Rails. Enough, however, has been done to shew clearly that the present Chancel may be assigned to certainly two, and probably to three, distinct periods.

For a distance of 20 ft. from the Chancel Arch the walls are built of Roman tiles laid evenly upon one another, *four tiles* with their interstices of mortar occupying *one foot*. This portion of the Church shews very careful workmanship, and may with the greatest probability be assigned to Roman building, although by some antiquarians it has been attributed to the time, and even the personal supervision, of St. Augustine. In the S. Wall there have been exposed two doorways, one *square-headed*, and the other with a *semicircular arch*. The square-headed doorway (as it now appears *externally*) has jambs of Roman tiles, with a lintel and sill formed of massive blocks of green sandstone. It is there 6 ft. high and 3 ft. 4 in. in width. *Internally* it seems 4 ft. 7 in. wide at the top, but this may be accounted for by the fact that in later times it was partially blocked up by a stone sarcophagus and other material; and on one side of the upper portion of the doorway, and extending beyond it towards the west, there was opened a low side-window, the western splayed jamb of which is still existing. This may perhaps have been a "Leper's Window," commanding a view of the Altar of St. Mary, occupying the site of the present pulpit. This square-headed doorway is certainly contemporaneous with the surrounding wall.

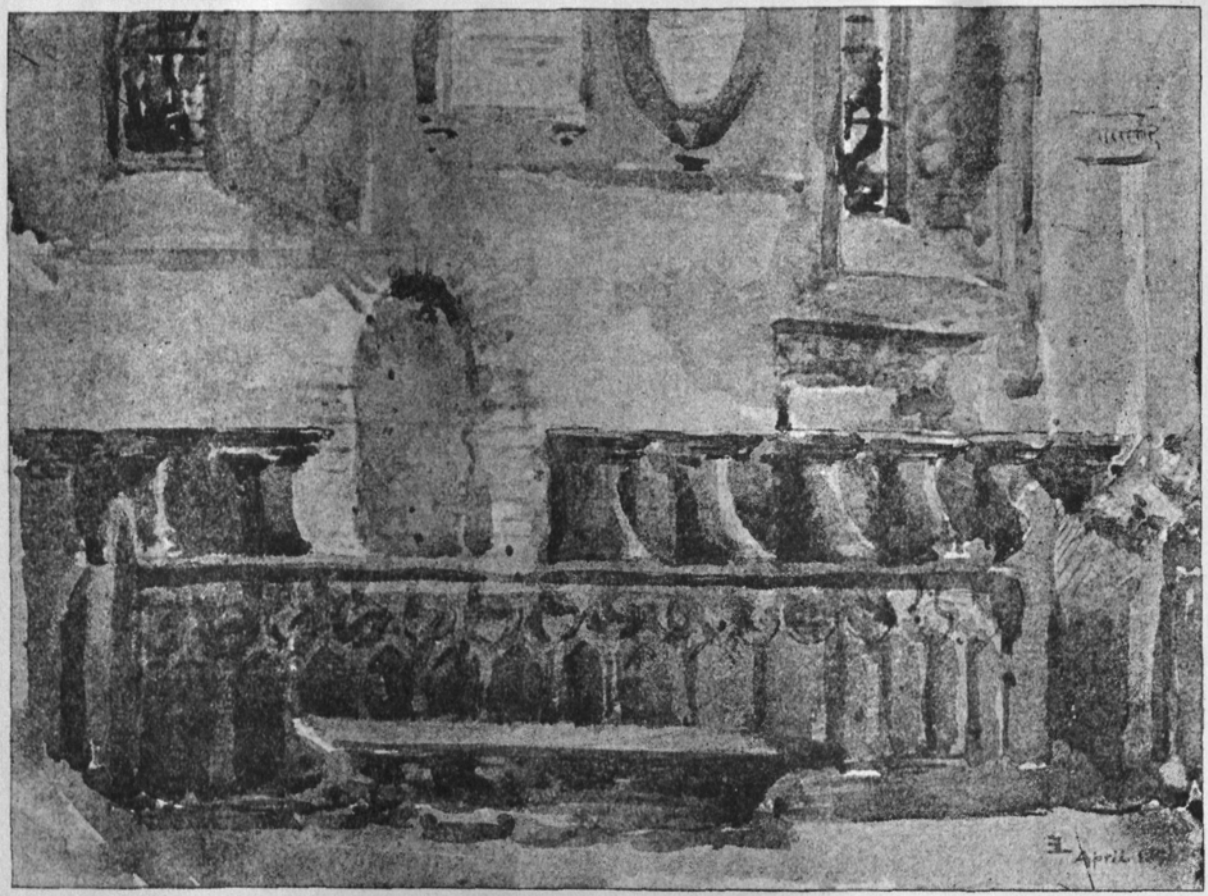
At a distance of 4 ft. 2 in. towards the east is the *semicircular-headed doorway* (that can be seen in the annexed Engraving). It is 6 ft. high and 2 ft. 1 in.

wide. The arch is mostly formed of converging blocks of Kentish rag, generally about 1 in. apart, though somewhat closer at the crown. The span at the springing is an inch or two wider than the span of the jambs. The imposts are formed of two Roman tiles, the upper one overhanging the lower, and the lower overhanging the jamb. The doorway is lined throughout with plaster, on which at its first opening-out were seen what looked like rough mathematical figures. The jambs *internally* are of Roman tiles, with occasional pieces of Kentish rag. *Externally* they are almost entirely of Roman tiles, though under the west impost, 3 ft. 10 in. above the sill, there has been inserted a fragment of freestone about $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. high, brought from elsewhere. On it are parts of an inscription, which has been supposed to date from the ninth or tenth century. The letters HONORE . . STÆ . . ET OMNIV̄ SC̄ORV̄ are still decipherable; and the whole may perhaps be read as, "To the honour of Saint (Mary ?) and all Saints." This may have been the dedication-stone of a Church, or it may not impossibly have been the dedication-stone of an Altar, as an order was issued in the ninth century by a Saxon Archbishop that a stone should be placed at the corner of each Altar specifying the name of the Saint or Saints to whom it was dedicated. A parallel to this has been found in the discovery of a stone from the Saxon Church of Deerhurst, the fragmentary inscription of which has been conjecturally read as, "In honore Sanctæ Trinitatis hoc altare dedicatum est."

This round-headed doorway has been hitherto supposed to be of the same date as the wall, but closer investigation has clearly proved that it is a later insertion, probably made in the Saxon period.

While in the surrounding wall there are (as I have before stated) only *four* Roman tiles to the foot, there are in the jambs of the doorway *six* tiles to the foot; and at the time of the insertion nearly 1 ft. of the surrounding wall was broken away, as will be noticed by any observer outside the Church.

The early brick wall extends eastward for 6 ft. 9 in. beyond the round-headed doorway till we reach a break in it, which was clearly the termination of the original Chancel. For the last 2 ft. the work is somewhat irregular, and from this circumstance (and from some evidence that has been discovered at this spot on the outside) a conjecture has been hazarded that here we have the beginning of a Roman apse. Eastwards of this break the walling is of different workmanship, shewing with the mortar-joints six tiles to a foot; and after 3 ft. 5 in. we come to a *Sedile*, which was discovered a short time ago blocked up with mediæval brickwork (see Illustration). It had apparently a pointed arch of which about 5 ins. have been cut away. The springing line is about 2 ft. 9½ in. above the seat; the radii are about 3 ft. 9 in., their centres being on the springing line. This would fix its measurements as follows—span 5 ft., depth about 1 ft. 3 in., height from seat to springing line 2 ft. 9½ in., and from seat to apex about 6 ft. 4 in. A difficulty has arisen as to the date of the Sedile from the fact that the top of it has been cut away by the insertion of a lancet window, appearing at first sight to belong to the Early English period, so that the Sedile would seem as if it must be of an earlier date than the window. But Mr. Livett, though believing it not impossible that the Sedile and lancet window were built at the same time, and the sill of the window



From a rough water-colour sketch by Miss E. Lyon.

S. WALL OF CHANCEL, SHEWING ROUND-HEADED SAXON DOORWAY.

altered afterwards, thinks it more probable that the Sedile and the brickwork in which it is placed were built late in the twelfth century, and the lancet window inserted subsequently, perhaps in the fourteenth century. The position of the Sedile would seem to point out that the Altar stood, in Early English times, immediately east of the step whereon the present Altar-rails are placed.

Little or nothing fresh has been discovered on the N. side of the Chancel. The so-called "Queen Bertha's tomb," which is now surmounted by a pseudo-Norman arch, is probably the tomb of the Restorer of the Church at the end of the twelfth century, and is coeval with the later brick wall. Below ground, in the North-West angle of the Chancel, were found two or three projecting Roman tiles, apparently the beginning of a cross wall which was destroyed when the present Chancel Arch was erected. Some slight signs of the cross wall have also been detected above the stalls in this angle.

It now only remains to mention the discoveries that have been made *outside* the S. Wall of the Chancel. Near the square-headed doorway described above there have been found underground the remains of two walls, running at right angles to the Chancel, and forming two sides of an *Adjunct* or side-chapel, the southern side of which has been destroyed in the process of digging graves. These walls are 4 ft. 9 in. apart, and are each of them 26 ins. wide, built entirely of Roman tiles. The Western Wall runs 8 ins. beneath the Eastern angle-wall of the Nave. Between the walls there is still existing part of a flooring of *opus signinum*. There can be no doubt that this *adjunct* is of the same workmanship, and the same

date, as the early brick wall of the Chancel. The foundations of both are precisely similar, and are constructively bonded together. The walls rest upon a footing-course of one brick, which forms the top of a shallow foundation of flints and stones. The brick-footing is continued along the Chancel Wall under the sill of the square-headed doorway, and is irregular in its projection.*

A careful examination of the existing face of the Chancel Wall above the remains, which was made by Mr. Livett, shews that the Eastern Wall of the adjunct above ground, now destroyed, was originally bonded into the Chancel Wall. Every alternate course shews a broken brick, and every other course the clean edge of a brick (see Sketch opposite p. 4).

This bonding cannot be traced above a line on a level with the lower edge of the lintel of the square-headed doorway.

What was the purpose of this *adjunct* we cannot positively say. It was suggested by the late Archbishop of Canterbury (who took the warmest interest in the Church, and also keenly watched the progress of the excavations) that it was used for baking the Holy Bread employed at the Celebration of the Mass. But it may have been only a small side-chapel, with its Altar.

Supposing there to have been an *Eastern Apse* to the original Church, it must have started inwards a little beyond the pilaster buttress still to be seen in the middle of the S. Chancel Wall. But this point opens out a wide field for discussion, and fuller

* *Cf.* Photograph, reproduced by the courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries.

From a rough water colour sketch by Miss E. Lyon.

THE SEDILE.

investigation may be necessary before it is finally determined.

Very little more need be said about the facts ascertained in the excavations. It is now generally conceded that the blocked *doorway at the S.E. corner of the Nave*, which is 6 ft. high and splayed externally (being 2 ft. 8 in. wide inside and 3 ft. wide outside the Church), is a later opening cut in the wall, and was not in the original building. When at the beginning of the explorations it was believed by some antiquarians that there was a *Western Apse* similar to that in the Christian Church at Silchester, and that the Arch (described in the account of the Western Wall of the Nave) opened into this Apse, the North-Eastern doorway was supposed to have been one of the entrances either to the Church or the *Narthex*. This theory seems to be now generally abandoned, but it is quite possible that further excavations beneath the Tower may give it a fresh lease of life.

The remarkable *nearly circular panel* outside the South Wall of the Nave, immediately behind the Norman piscina, has always been a puzzle. The dimensions of it, as now seen, are roughly 4 ft. by 3 ft. 8 in. It is sunk 6 ins. into the wall, is unevenly splayed, and in parts plastered. In Stukeley's engraving of the Church (1722 A.D.) it is represented as a round-headed doorway—but there are no voussoirs or arch-stones. The result of excavations beneath the surface are doubtful. Generally speaking, there are courses of two Roman tiles running along this part of the Nave Wall, below which are Kentish ragstones and a foundation of concrete. Singularly enough the *top* row of Roman tiles (just below the opening) has been interrupted for a space of 3 ft. 8 in., and it looks

at first sight as if the *lower* row were the sill of a doorway, from which a slight suspicion of a rough vertical joint goes upwards for a little distance. But the *one tile* course does not extend the whole width of the panel.

It would exhaust too much space if I were to enter into additional details, such as the question of the date of the buttresses in the S. Wall of the Nave. Certain archæologists have concluded that they are Norman, or, at any rate, of later date than the wall; but the discussion of this point is highly complicated, and requires much further consideration than it has yet received, and so it shall be left to another occasion, for there seems no chance of the whole controversy respecting the Architecture of the Church being closed for many years to come.

So far we have been simply placing on record certain facts which remain true whatever inference may be drawn from them, but before concluding this Article it seems necessary to say a few words on the controversy that has been carried on for some months with regard to the probable *date* of the building. Up to the year 1880 the opinion universally prevailing was the one stated by Mr. M. Bloxam, and repeated by Dean Stanley, that St. Martin's contained indeed Roman materials, but that they were not *in situ*, and had been merely used up again at the *re-building* of the Church during the latter part of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century. The present writer well remembers the somewhat mild astonishment that was expressed when it was suggested

Photographed by H. Collis Canterbury.

FOUNDATIONS OF ADJUNCT WALLS.

AT RIGHT ANGLES TO THE S. W. WALL OF THE CHANCEL.

(in a Paper read before the British Archæological Society in 1881) that there was at any rate a *Saxon doorway*, and perhaps a few other Saxon remains in the Church. Subsequent examination, conducted with much labour and exhaustive research so far as was then possible, induced a firm belief that a considerable portion of the existing Church was actually of *Roman* workmanship; and, after a lengthy correspondence with antiquaries in different parts of England, this belief was boldly expressed, and attempted to be justified, in the *History of St. Martin's Church*, published in the year 1891.

The reasonableness, and more than probability, of this theory was then generally accepted (perhaps *per incuriam*), the only note of disagreement that was occasionally heard coming from those who had never seen a Roman Church in Britain, and were consequently somewhat incredulous.

The revelation, however, of fresh features of interest in the Church by the recent explorations attracted wider attention, and once more revived the discussion. The whole subject was debated in the spring of this year at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries in London, after an able Paper read by their Secretary, Mr. W. H. St. John Hope. Since then, from time to time, the Church has been visited by a number of distinguished experts, and the question as to the date of the original building was brought prominently forward at the Canterbury Meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute in July 1896. What the newspapers called "the Battle of St. Martin's" raged with unabated vigour during the week, the controversy being introduced in a well-considered lecture given, with numerous illustrations, by Mr. Livett. Various

opinions were on that occasion (as often previously) expressed with that *positiveness* which is said to mark the true antiquarian!—a positiveness, in some instances, that had little foundation in real knowledge or personal enquiry, but rested chiefly on *à priori* arguments or purely negative criticism. In addition to the names mentioned above it is but necessary for me to allude to those of Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite, Mr. G. Fox, and others, to shew that no pains have been spared, and no professional attainments or special knowledge wanting, to determine the issue on a scientific basis. It may be true to the experience of human nature, but yet it seems a feeble conclusion, if we confess that, after all this apparently exhaustive discussion, the controversy on the main point is as much alive as ever.

Premising that by "the Chancel" is meant the original Chancel extending 20 feet eastward from the Nave, I may state the following four as the only theories that now hold the field:—

(1) A Roman date for the Chancel, and a later Roman date for the Nave; or (2) *vice versâ*—though this theory, formerly much in vogue, is at present out of fashion.

(3) A Roman date for the Chancel, and a Saxon date for the Nave.

(4) An early Saxon date for the Chancel, and a later Saxon date for the Nave.

It is indeed some consolation to friends and lovers of St. Martin's to know that even the anti-Roman disputants ascribe portions of it to such respectable antiquity as the time of St. Augustine (1300 years ago), and therefore, whatever ultimate conclusion may be arrived at, it is still the earliest existing Church in the island of Great Britain.

Many of the architectural details bearing on the subject are so minute, and so highly technical, that they are not suitable to the character of this Paper, so that I purpose to confine myself rather to broad general features, and to narrow the controversy (at any rate in the first place) to the question whether there still exists in the Church any *Roman* workmanship, or whether even the most ancient part of it must be assigned to the *Saxon* period. It is difficult to avoid tedious recapitulation of many points that are thoroughly familiar to those who have studied the subject, and some of which have appeared over and over again in print—but it seems advisable to record them in the pages of *Archæologia Cantiana*, as there must be many of its readers to whom the details of the dispute are still only partially known.

The principal arguments in favour of the *Roman* date of portions of the Church are these :—

(1) *History.*—It is distinctly mentioned by Bede that there was (at the coming of St. Augustine in 597 A.D.) "on the East side of the city a Church dedicated in honour of St. Martin, built of old while the Romans still occupied Britain." Now this is direct testimony to which the greatest weight must be allowed, when we consider the character and authority of the writer. He was born in the year 673 A.D., *i.e.* only seventy-six years after the mission of St. Augustine and sixty-nine years after his death, and wrote his *Ecclesiastical History* in the first part of the eighth century (sometime before 735 A.D., when he died), taking the greatest possible pains to make it worthy of its subject. His information with regard to the history of Christianity in Kent was derived from Albinus, Abbot of St. Augustine's, who was

himself a pupil of Theodore (Archbishop of Canterbury in 668 A.D.) the great consolidator of the English Church. We are told that Albinus referred to the records in his keeping, and sent Nothelm, a priest of London, to search the archives at Rome, where were preserved some valuable letters of Gregory the Great and other subsequent Popes. Considering then the extreme carefulness of Bede, and the sources from whence he derived his materials, we cannot imagine any evidence (short of first-hand) more trustworthy and valuable—and it seems to me that the Roman origin of St. Martin's Church might almost be accepted as proved if it depended upon the testimony of Bede alone.

That he should have written as he did, making a positive statement that the Church was built during the Roman occupancy of Britain, while all the time it owed its foundation to Queen Bertha or St. Augustine, is perfectly incredible. Were the latter theory true (as is maintained by some antiquarians now), would it not, in Bede's time, have been an easily ascertained fact, capable perhaps of documentary proof, especially among those who were inmates of St. Augustine's own monastery, and would have claimed St. Martin's Church as a specially precious inheritance—the legacy of their founder?

The only way that can be found out of this dilemma is to throw doubt on the genuineness or truthfulness of Bede's narrative, but no one has yet ventured in sober earnest to impugn his accuracy as a historian. The weight of historical evidence of this kind with regard to architectural facts cannot be too strongly insisted upon, for it is infinitely more valuable than any conventional ideas as to the supposed

character of a building, which confessedly varies to some extent with the materials ready to hand, the skill and capacity of the workmen, and whether it was erected in the zenith or decadence of the style adopted.

A priori then we may assume that there was a Roman Church in existence on St. Martin's Hill when St. Augustine came to Canterbury. Can we find any evidence in the present building which would strengthen the conclusion that portions of this Church are still standing?

(2) I have already alluded to the *pink plaster*, patches of which are found here and there throughout the Nave, and though well aware (as previously stated) that plaster of a somewhat similar kind has been met with in many Churches of a subsequent date, yet I must again lay stress on the point that this particular plaster has been pronounced by the greatest experts (including Mr. J. T. Irvine), after careful analysis, to be *Roman*, and to be distinguishable from later imitations by its hardness and texture, and the smaller admixture of sand. No perceptible difference can be detected between a piece of pink plaster stripped off the South Wall of the Nave and one taken directly from the undoubted Roman Villa at Wingham.

(3) The windows lately discovered in the West Wall of the Nave are by every one allowed to be built *more Romano*. The variation of the mortar used in their construction, from *white* mortar in the jambs to *pink* mortar in the voussoirs of the arch, is a very noticeable feature, and can be exactly paralleled in the Roman Pharos at Dover. It is certainly *primâ facie* a strong evidence of Roman workmanship.

The objection that "Roman windows were never splayed" may be met (*a*) by the general statement that the introduction of light by means of a splay is so natural that the idea could not have escaped a Roman builder, especially in countries where there was less light than in Italy. Isidore of Seville, a contemporary of Gregory the Great, living in the midst of Roman work, must be describing what was the distinctive features of windows around him when he says (l. xv. cvii.): "Fenestræ sunt quibus pars exterior angusta et interior diffusa est, quales in horreis videmus;" and (*b*) Mr. Roach Smith, in his *Collectanea Antiqua*, gives several illustrations of Roman splayed windows at Arles, Vienne, etc. (see vol. v., p. 42; vol. vi., p. 241, etc.); and I am informed (though I have not verified the fact) that there is one at South Shields mentioned by Mr. Robert Blair, F.S.A.

(4) An ecclesiastical architect describes walls of Roman masonry in this country as "chiefly constructed of stone or flint, according to the part of the country in which one or the other material prevailed, embedded in mortar, and bonded at certain intervals throughout with regular courses or layers of large flat bricks or tiles which from the inequality of thickness and size do not appear to have been shaped in any regular mould." This account almost exactly describes the character of the walls in the Nave of St. Martin's Church up to a certain height, and especially where these walls have been practically undisturbed behind the present woodwork. Here, in many cases, the bonding courses are 9 inches apart. Roman tiles vary in length from 2 ft. to 15 in., and in thickness from 3 ins. to $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

So far I have confined myself to what appear to me evidences of Roman workmanship in the *Nave*, because in my judgment that part of the Church has strong claims to Roman origin, whatever be the decision as to the *Chancel*. Mr. Livett, however, without expressing any definite opinion on this point, claims that he has distinctly proved by structural analysis that, whatever be the date of the Nave, the brickwork of the original Chancel is certainly earlier. In a letter written on August 8th, 1896, to the *Kentish Gazette*, he observes that "the oldest portion of the existing building comprises (1) the side-walls of the Chancel, extending from the Chancel-arch to a point 20 ft. east of the arch; (2) the foundations of a destroyed Adjunct that once stood on the south side of the Chancel; (3) a portion of the East Wall of the Nave on either side of the Chancel-arch; and (4) certain foundations under the floor of the Nave. These are all regarded as belonging to a building earlier in date than the existing Nave." He claims that on these points a general agreement has been reached. It may be doubted whether in this latter respect he has not been too sanguine, and whether he has not accepted as "established facts" matters that are still open to discussion, and that may be upset (as so many other theories have been before) by fresh excavations, which, it is fair to add, Mr. Livett himself deems necessary in order to determine finally the relative dates of the Nave and Chancel. Assuming, however (for the sake of argument), that the Chancel is the earlier—then if we can establish a reasonable probability of a Roman date for the Nave, for those whom I may call without discourtesy "the pro-Saxon controversialists," *cadit quæstio*. On the other hand,

even though it be shewn that the Nave is of a post-Roman period, yet still the Chancel may be Roman, as being in their opinion of avowedly greater antiquity; so that in either case we may be able to justify the general accuracy of Bede's historical narrative, for no one seriously believes that *every* stone and *every* feature of the present Church is of Roman workmanship.

We have spoken already of the Nave. Is there anything in the *Chancel* to militate against its Roman origin? The style of this portion of the Church is that of Roman tiles laid evenly upon one another. If we require a parallel for this *opus lateritium* in England, we may refer to remains found at the Roman Villas at Wingham and Darenth, at the Studfall Roman castrum at Lympne, the blocked sluice-gate in the Silchester city wall, and elsewhere. In fact, this is one of the ordinary styles of Roman building as distinguished from quadrangular or polygonal masonry, *opus reticulatum*, concrete, and what is called *mixture*, *i.e.* stones bonded together by courses of tiles at regular or sometimes irregular intervals.

There is one other point which, though of a negative character, may yet have some weight. Within the past year very careful examination has been made by Mr. Micklethwaite into Saxon work and remains in England—and I believe he has satisfied himself that many buildings, some of them popularly supposed to be Roman, must be assigned to a Saxon period. Amongst these he mentions the Churches at Brixworth, Reculver, Lyminge, Rochester, Dover Castle, and several others. Of all these he has drawn careful plans, which were explained by him in a very comprehensive Paper that was read at the Summer

Meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute at Canterbury, and will (I believe) be published in the January number of the *Archæological Journal*. It is a remarkable fact (so far as my recollection of his Paper goes) that the plan of St. Martin's Church—either with or without its reputed Eastern Apse—does not agree, in many essential details, with a single one of those above-mentioned. And yet if we accept the date of St. Martin's as post-Roman it must have been built within the same century, or even within a comparatively few years of some of them. Mr. Micklethwaite lays special stress on the apparent identity of character between the work at *St. Pancras* (Canterbury) and in the Chancel of St. Martin's; and says that "the date of one must be very near to that of the other"—and as he does not believe that St. Pancras can be Roman, therefore in his opinion the St. Martin's Chancel is not Roman.

Now in answer to this I will first say that the post-Roman date of St. Pancras is only an assumption, which has not yet attained the dignity of an "established fact." There is very much to be argued on the other side, and some competent authorities believe that in the remains at St. Pancras we can trace evidences of both an earlier and a later Roman building—though it is outside my purpose in the present Paper to follow out at any length this interesting controversy.

But—granting, for the moment, that the Church of St. Pancras was built or restored by St. Augustine (and this is the latest date assigned to it)—the identity in plan and character of the two Churches is more apparent than real. It must not be forgotten that the plan of St. Martin's is the combined result of buildings of two dates, so that, if any comparison be made, it points to the conclusion that St. Pancras is

a later copy of St. Martin's, or that the *original* St. Martin's was in part rebuilt, so that its plan conformed to that of St. Pancras. If we compare St. Pancras with either of the two early parts of St. Martin's, the identity breaks down. In the Nave of St. Martin's the side-chapels of St. Pancras are wanting, and no sign of a Western porch has been discovered—while there is nothing in the Chancel of St. Pancras to correspond with the Adjunct in St. Martin's, nor with Mr. Livett's conjectural prolongation of the Chancel Walls westwards. With regard to the character of the masonry, there is no similarity between that of St. Pancras and that of the *Nave* of St. Martin's. There is more similarity in construction between St. Pancras and the *Chancel* of St. Martin's, but here too are points of difference that were pointed out to me by Mr. Livett. The walls of St. Pancras are only 1 *ft.* 10 *in.* in thickness: they are constructed almost entirely of broken bricks, roughly cut to a triangular shape and fitted together in the core, the interstices filled up with small bits of brick. The walls of St. Martin's are 2 *ft.* 2 *in.* thick, and contain a much larger proportion of whole bricks, about 12 ins. wide, laid side by side in each course, the interval between them being filled up with mortar and small stones. The walls of St. Pancras were coated in many parts with a pink plaster (thinner than that adhering to the Nave-walls of St. Martin's), but in the Chancel of St. Martin's not a single particle of pink wall plaster has ever been discovered.* It is fair, however, to mention that

* We may mention also the difference in the treatment of the division between Nave and Chancel. In St. Pancras there was a triple Chancel-arch—in St. Martin's the space is too narrow to admit of any such arrangement.

small portions of a flooring of *opus signinum* were found in the Adjunct of St. Martin's, resembling that existing in some parts of the Nave of St. Pancras.

I pass over as unworthy of serious discussion the argument that has sometimes been brought forward, viz., that St. Martin's cannot be a Roman Church because no Roman Churches have yet been discovered in this country, and it is not therefore likely that they exist!—an argument that was used at no remote period to prove, similarly, that there was no remaining Saxon work—also the contention that it is not Roman because its ground-plan does not tally with the ground-plan of the Roman Church at Silchester. In the first place, we do not yet know what the original ground-plan of St. Martin's was, and the question as to whether it possessed an Eastern or Western Apse, or even side-aisles in the Nave, has not been definitely settled. And, secondly, to contend that it cannot be Roman because it is unlike the Church at Silchester would be to limit the capabilities of Roman builders to one monotonous design, perpetually and exactly reproduced for a century or more, which would be contrary both to reason and experience.

There is, however, one objection remaining which must be faced, and which derives weight from the fact that it is put forward with all the scientific knowledge of a skilful architect. The Nave of the Church is described as "being built of old stuff used anyway just as it came to hand, and tells of a time when there were ruins near at which the builders were free to help themselves—a state of things unlikely in Roman Kent, but likely enough after the wars which accompanied the English occupation." This seems a forcible argument, but it is not in my opinion altogether

borne out by facts. That a great part of St. Martin's Nave is patchy and rudely built no one can deny—but let us consider what destructiveness and neglect it would have passed through, supposing it to have been built in Roman times. Durovernium (Canterbury) was undoubtedly abandoned by the Britons flying before the Jutish invasion, and was at first left unoccupied by the conquerors themselves. Its site lay for many a year uninhabited and desolate: its very name was forgotten, and the Church would naturally have fallen into a state of partial ruin. Restored at the coming of Queen Bertha, probably ravaged by the Danes, repaired and enlarged to a great extent in the Early English period, gradually falling once more into decay till even at the beginning of the present century it is spoken of as a "humble Church"

> "Yet humbled more
> By lapse of years, by lack of reverent care,"

in what condition should we expect its walls to be? Even within the last twenty years an early brick buttress, coeval with the original Chancel, has been improved (?) into a tame modern-looking projection! When we consider all this, are we surprised if portions of the Nave look like "old stuff used anyway"? But it may also be maintained that this is not a correct description of the lower portion of the walls, especially where (as I have stated before) they have been comparatively preserved behind the existing wooden pews. We can find there strong evidences of a more or less symmetrical design with Kentish ragstone bonded by courses of Roman tiles—and parts of the wall might satisfy even the most critical architect. But even if the description "old stuff," etc., be applicable to the

original parts of the Nave walling, the same description would equally apply to the undoubted Roman work of the Pharos at Dover.

Is there not, too, such a thing as a period of decadence in any style? Just as there is good and bad Saxon work, good and bad Norman work, good and bad Gothic work, so must there have been good and bad Roman work. We are told in an account of the Roman excavations at Silchester that "examination shewed that the rubble masonry above the concrete foundations of the whole western range (of the basilica) was of a *very poor character*." "The stones (in a part of the Roman Wall of London) form a mere skin, between the tile bonding courses, to the thick *irregular* rubble core." In the same wall, above the bonding course of three rows of tiles at the ancient ground-level, "the body of the wall is composed throughout its height of masses of ragstone with now and then a fragment of chalk, bedded *very roughly* in mortar which has been pitched in, not run in, sometimes with so little care as to leave occasional empty spaces amongst the stones." It seems useless to multiply quotations for the purpose of establishing an obvious fact, viz., that granting a general *idea* and method pervading a building (as I believe there is clearly in the Nave of St. Martin's) it is quite possible that, at a time of decadence and in the hands of inferior (perhaps British) workmen, this idea should be somewhat roughly carried out. The period to which I would attribute the erection of the Nave is somewhere towards the close of the fourth century—not so very long before the Roman evacuation of Britain.

The last objection to the Roman date is the dedi-

cation of the Church to *St. Martin*, who did not die till the last decade of the fourth century. But this objection has been fully dealt with in the *History of St. Martin's Church*, and presents little or no difficulty.

It has been impossible for me in a brief Article to enter more minutely into the details of this interesting controversy. In stating the salient points I have endeavoured to make some small contribution to its ultimate solution. Every one connected with the Church, either on personal, sentimental, or merely antiquarian grounds, has assuredly but one desire—that the *truth* should prevail. An intimate acquaintance with every detail of the building, and every step taken in the late (as well as in former) excavations, may have some weight even against the superior authority of professional experts, who are obliged often to accept their facts from hearsay, or may have some preconceived theory to establish. We owe indeed to them a debt of gratitude for the interest they have so abundantly shewn, and have derived much assistance from their light and guidance. Whether it be settled in the future that St. Martin's Church be the product of *Roman* or *Saxon* workmanship, it must ever be regarded as a grand historical monument, dear both from its ecclesiastical associations and its remote antiquity. It is wonderful enough that Christian worship should have been continuously carried on within these walls for 1300 years since the coming of St. Augustine—more wonderful still if it can be established (as in all humility we think it can) that it owes its origin to a band of Roman soldiers quartered in Canterbury—with (perhaps) the indirect assistance of the Emperor Maximus, and the goodwill of his intimate friend, the saintly Bishop of Tours.