TEYNHAM CHURCH: ARCHITECTURAL NOTES.

BY F. C. ELLISTON ERWOOD.

TEYNHAM CHURCH, dedicated to St. Mary, and situated approximately in the centre of the parish, occupies a somewhat prominent position between the Dover road to the south and the Swale northwards. The building consists of a nave, with north and south aisles, north and south transepts, a chancel, and a western tower, which last is peculiar in that it is flanked north and south by unusual westward extensions of both aisles.

The general impression gathered by a superficial survey is that of a thirteenth-century cruciform building, with a few later additions, and thus it is described in most of the published accounts. A more careful investigation, however, reveals details that, if not affording absolutely complete evidence on all points, at any rate indicate a structure of earlier date; and this evidence, joined to the fact that a considerable proportion of English thirteenth-century cruciform churches has evolved from a much simpler building, is sufficient to establish a twelfth-century church, whose plans and details can be laid down with some degree of certainty. The suggested development of the church is illustrated by the small block plans (Fig. 1), and may be briefly outlined before proceeding to detail the data on which they are based.

12th Century (early).—The church consisted of a simple nave and square-ended chancel. The existing arcades preserve the lines of the north and south walls of the church, and the portions of wall above these arcades may conceivably be of this early date, though there is nothing save theory to substantiate it. The chancel would occupy the interior of the present crossing, while the west wall of the nave would

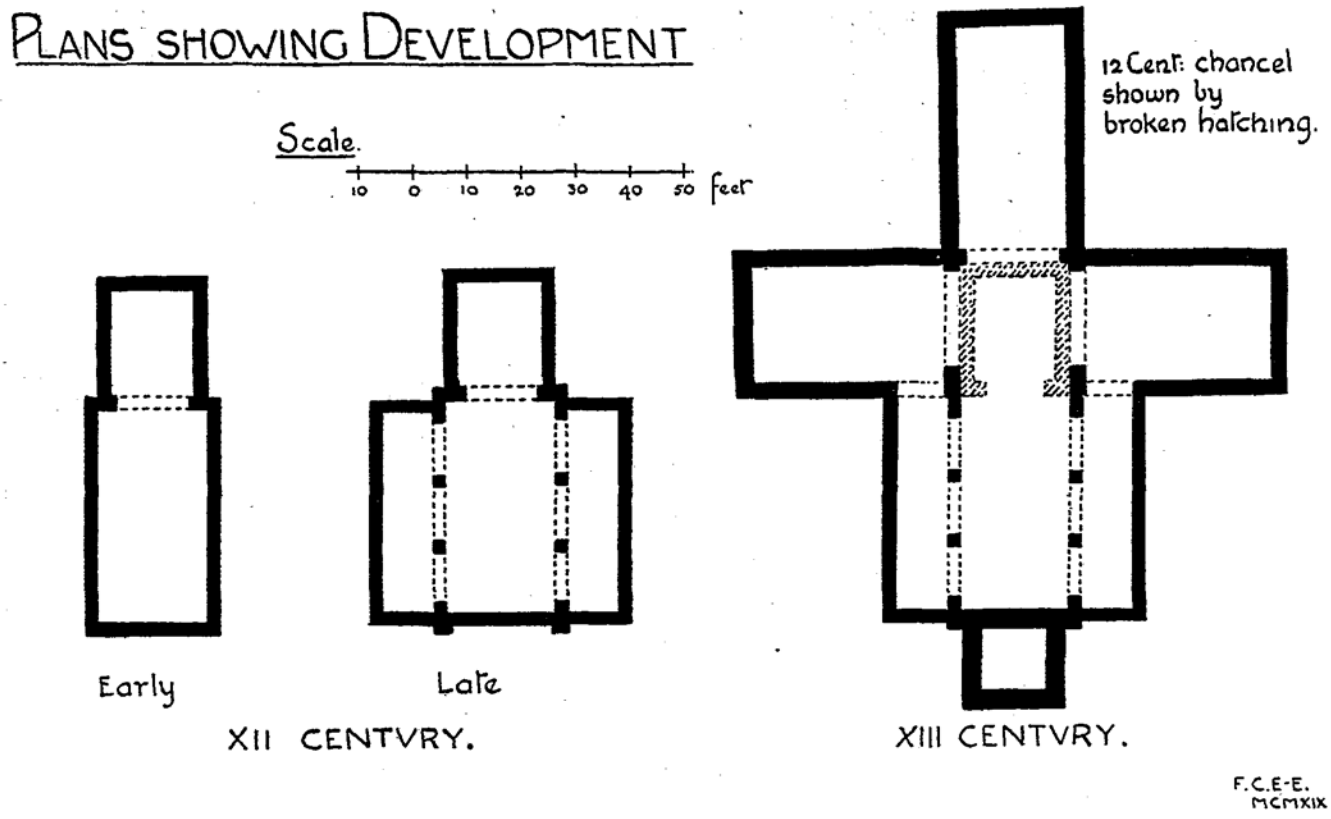
TEYNHAM CHVRCH
PLANS SHOWING DEVELOPMENT
Scale.
10 0 10 20 30 40 50 feet
12 Cent: chancel shown by broken hatching.
Early
Late
XII CENTVRY.
XIII CENTVRY.
F.C.E-E.
MCMXIX

Fig. 1.

occupy the site of the present west wall, part of which may well be original (see General Plan, Fig. 3). This small church conforms fairly well in general proportion with those dealt with by Canon Livett in his paper on Early Norman Churches in *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. XXI.; the original church at Teynham being, however, about one-third larger in most dimensions than those of Paddlesworth and Dode described therein.

12th Century (later).—Aisles were added north and south to the earlier building, necessitating the piercing of the original walls with arches, forming thus an arcade of three bays. Two buttresses were built, masking the junction of the extensions to the west front, and serving also to support the weakened arcade walls. These aisles were 9 feet wide—somewhat in excess of the usual dimension for early aisles—but from the fabric it is evident they were constructed before the transepts. The appearance of the church at this stage may be gathered from Fig. 2, where the building is shewn with low aisle walls and roof, covering in one continuous span, nave and both aisles.

13th Century.—The normal development of the thirteenth century produced a cruciform church, practically that which remains now. An extended chancel and north and south transepts were built around the small twelfth-century chancel, and, in addition, a tower was erected at the west end between the two early buttresses.

Later Work.—Subsequent additions were chiefly in the nature of insertions, but the two flanking additions to the tower require further consideration, which will be afforded later.

It now remains to examine the structural and other evidence for this development theory.

One of the most noteworthy features about the building is the extraordinary variety of building material used in its construction. Besides the ordinary flint nodules, tufa, Reigate stone, Kentish marble, Caen stone (one piece in the north wall of the transept bearing typical twelfth-century chevron moulding, and another a roughly incised

"scratch" dial), ragstone, sarsen, beach pebbles, Roman and Mediæval brick, are found in varying degrees of abundance.

Some of these obviously point to Norman work, and afford the strongest piece of evidence for the early church, for of any wall that can beyond doubt be assigned to this period on the strength of its architectural details, there is none. Nor is this remarkable; for the disappearance of all

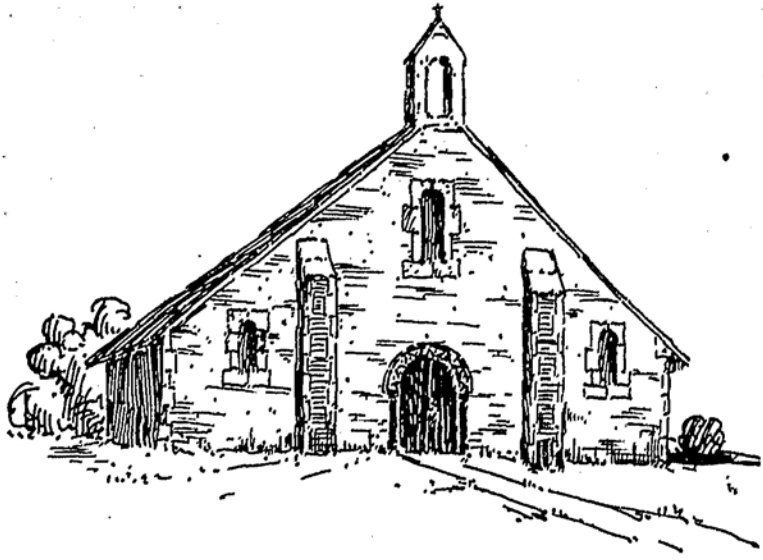

Fig. 2.—TEYNHAM CHURCH.

Reconstruction of the west end, as it probably appeared at the end of the 12th century.

of the early walls would have been achieved by the end of the thirteenth century, when the enlargement was complete, and the old material absorbed and re-used in the later work. It is doubtful even whether the wall above the nave arcade is original. This arcade was rebuilt certainly in the fifteenth century, and from the thinness of the wall above (2 feet only, as compared with 2 feet 9 inches, the normal width of an early wall) it seems that it was rebuilt in its entirety.

The west wall of the nave has been obscured by the

Photo *F. C. Elliston Erwood*

TEYNHAM CHURCH

General view from the South-West.

Photo *F. C. Elliston Erwood*

TEYNHAM CHURCH

Tomb in the Churchyard near the West End of the Building.

erection of the tower externally and by plastering internally. Nothing, therefore, can be argued from this source.

For the later twelfth-century development there is more substantial evidence, sufficient indeed to establish and justify the plan as given in Fig. 1. In the northern vestry can be seen, in its south-east corner, a cement rendered projection, which suggests a modern chimney flue, but an examination of the corresponding position, the north-east corner of the southern or choir vestry, reveals a similar projection, well hidden from view below by a dark and dirty cupboard devoted to the church cleaner's materials, and equally masked above by piles of miscellaneous rubbish.

This feature is, fortunately, not covered with cement, and at once indicates its character, and that of the corresponding feature on the north, as a late twelfth-century buttress, with a somewhat greater projection than the earliest type, but still not of the full depth of later times. Its coins are of Reigate stone, and it seems to have been without off-sets, but with a plain sloping head. Quite evidently these were designed in some measure to resist the thrust of the arches inserted in the walls when the aisles were built. These aisle walls, both north and south, shew straight joints against the west walls of the transepts, and in each case retain at both ends sufficient indication of their original coins *in situ* to make their extent certain. The fact that these external walls shew signs of having been heightened in a succeeding century tends to confirm the accuracy of the small sketch (Fig. 2), where the building at this time is shewn as covered by one plain gable roof. Again, no doors nor windows of this period remain, and their positions are either obscured or occupied by later insertions. The arcades of the nave were, in all likelihood, in three bays (rather than two, as now), each supported by two full piers with responds east and west. One other feature remains in the traces of an internal plinth throughout the greater part of the south wall and the eastern portion of the north wall. This plinth is quite rough—without any moulding, or chamfer, and may be an original offset of the wall, now much obscured

by plaster. The character of the church was entirely altered in the thirteenth century by the addition of a considerably larger chancel and two deep transepts, the latter in their combined length from north to south being almost equal to the length of the new church from east to west. These enlargements surrounded the old chancel, which was ultimately taken down, the space being thrown into the nave and forming the crossing, which frequently, in larger churches of this type, was crowned with a tower. No such tower was ever erected here, the abutments being of far too weak a character to support the additional weight. Instead, a tower was built at the west end of the nave.

The chancel is practically complete save for the insertion of a five-light window in a later style, and for the fact that the chancel arch has been rebuilt. Also the two corner buttresses at the west end are modern additions. Externally the walling has been in great part restored; but on the north, near to its junction with the transept, there is a patch of walling of early character, very suggestive of herring-bone work. Most of the other windows are original and form two finely-proportioned, though simple, series of lancets, with broad internal splays quite in keeping with the spacious character of the interior. Below the eastern window, on the south side, the string-course is original; elsewhere it is modern restoration, as is a great deal of the internal stonework. A contemporary piscina, with a trefoiled head and stopped chamfered reveals, is situated beneath the same window. Its position, much too low down for convenience, shews that the chancel floor has been raised considerably above its proper level. In the east wall of the chancel, to south of the communion table, is an aumbry, or cupboard, perhaps of the fourteenth century.

Both arms of the transept were originally similar, lit by ten windows, four in each east wall and three in the west wall, while the gable walls, north and south, contained each two lancets, with a circular or very slightly vesica-shaped quatrefoiled light above them. These early arrangements have been much disturbed. In both transepts the eastern

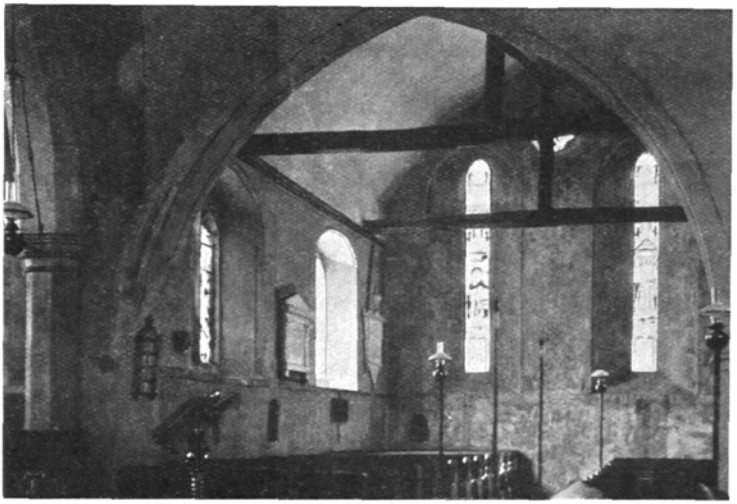

Photo *F. C. Elliston Erwood*

TEYNHAM CHURCH

View from the Crossing into the South Transept.

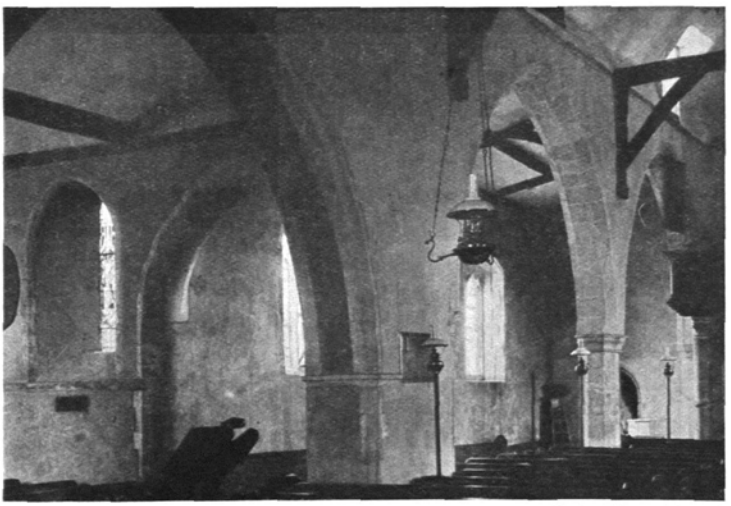

Photo *F. C. Elliston Erwood*

TEYNHAM CHURCH

South Arcade and Aisle of the Nave, looking South-West.

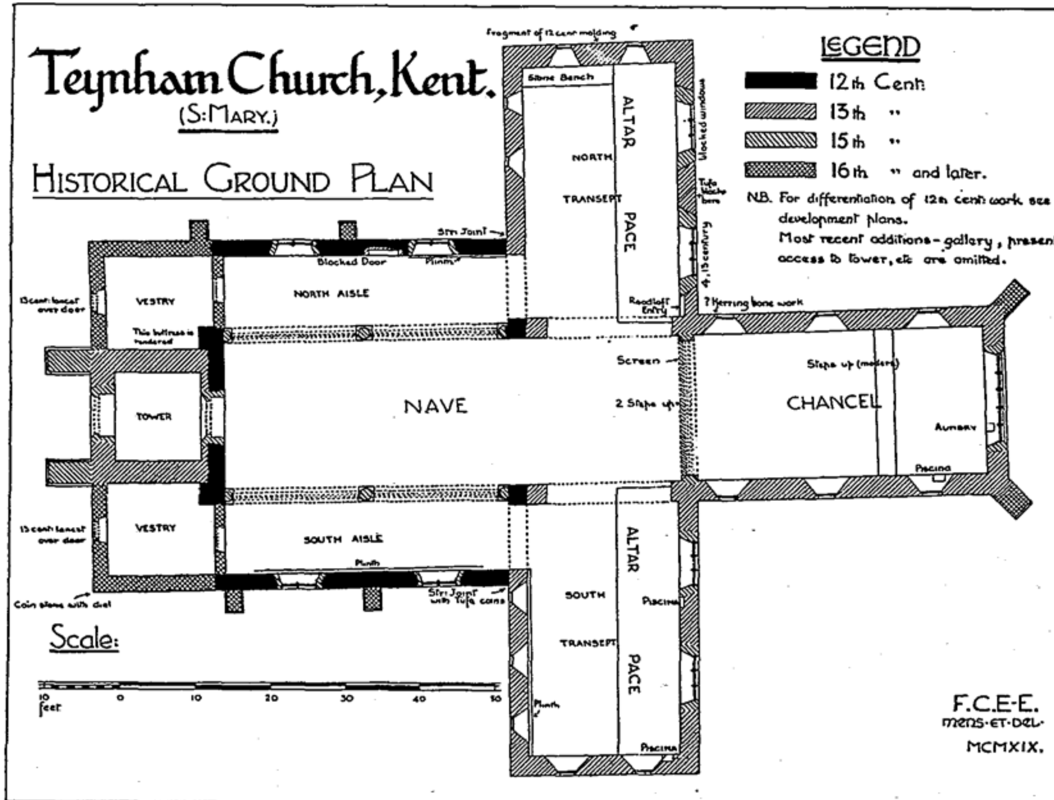
Teynham Church, Kent.
(S: Mary.)
Historical Ground Plan
Legend
12th Cent.
13th "
15th "
16th " and later.
N.B. For differentiation of 12th cent. work see development plans.
Most recent additions – gallery, present access to tower, etc. are omitted.
Fragment of 12 cent. molding
Stone Bench
North Transept
Altar Pace
Blocked windows
Tufa blocks here
Rood loft Entry
? Herring bone work
Str. Joint
Blocked Door
Plinth
Vestry
North Aisle
This buttress is rendered
Tower
Nave
Screen
2 Steps up
Chancel
Steps up (modern)
Aumbry
Piscina
Vestry
South Aisle
Plinth
Str. Joint with Tufa coins
South Transept
Altar Pace
Piscina
Coin stone with dial
Scale:
10 feet 0 10 20 30 40 50
F.C.E-E.
mens-et-del-
MCMXIX.

Fig. 3.

lancets have been removed and fifteenth-century three-light windows have taken their place, though on the north the original stonework of the thirteenth-century windows is apparent. The corresponding wall on the south is covered with ivy. The west wall of the south transept is complete, while the similar wall of the north transept has lost one lancet. The gable walls retain their original arrangement, though in almost every case the stonework is in a very bad condition, either almost weathered away or else clumsily patched with cement. The walls of both transepts are noteworthy for the variety of the material employed, Roman brick being especially plentiful.

Internally the string-course below the windows has been completely chopped away, but several interesting features remain—not the least important being the altar pace on which stood a row of altars beneath the windows. Two piscinas remain in the south transept, one in the middle of the east wall and one at the east end of the south wall, but these are probably of somewhat late introduction. No details are visible, and from its position the example in the east wall cannot belong to the original arrangement of the altars. The north transept has a stone bench running along its north wall, while there are remains of a plinth on the interior of the south transept's west wall.

In the south-east corner of the north transept is a recess, indicating the entrance to the rood-loft stairs, but this is certainly later than the rest of the work.

It will be observed that there is a remarkable variation of dimensions with regard to the surviving lancets; especially in the case of those on the west wall of the north transept, where the northward of the pair looks distinctly earlier than its companion, though it is hardly likely to be so.

The two arches at the mouths of the transepts are of the thirteenth century, though they shew signs of reconstruction, and there are indications that the eastern arm of each arch sprang originally from a respond, instead of rising weakly, as now, from a flat wall, without any sense of support. On the west, each arch rises from a simply moulded abacus.

Photo *F. C. Elliston Erwood*

TEYNHAM CHURCH

Exterior from the north-east, showing traces of Lancet Windows in the North Arm of the Transept.

The arches opening from the aisles to the transepts, on the other hand, spring from the wall without corbels or responds, and consist, as do the larger arches, of a plain arch with a chamfer on each edge.

During this period other alterations took place in the earlier fabric. There is the rere arch of a north door, midway along the north aisle,* and above the modern western doorways of the annexes to the tower are two windows of thirteenth-century character and date, obviously rebuilt into a much later wall. These may be supposed to have come from the west walls of either aisle, when the extensions were made, in which case they supplanted the smaller twelfth-century lights, which would have occupied a similar position.

The tower, which also dates from this century, is a substantial square structure, originally without buttresses, and, like most of the towers of this period, without any structural stairway, access to the upper stages having been obtained only by means of a ladder. Most of the details of the tower, as now seen, are of fourteenth or fifteenth-century date, but a contemporary lancet still remains on the west side of the ringing stage. The fifteenth century was one of insertions and reparations, chief of which were the present nave arcade and the chancel arch. Whether the original twelfth-century arcade had lasted till now, or whether it had been replaced at any other period, it is certain that the present arcade, supported by octagonal piers, with typically moulded fifteenth-century caps and bases, is one of the latest features in the church. It consists of two arches of one wide chamfered order, springing from responds east and west, and supported by one free pier. Of somewhat similar character is the chancel arch, which, further, is more interesting in that it retains several features that elucidate the problem of the rood, screen, loft and fittings. The present east window is nearly all modern work reproducing the

* In the photograph of Teynham Church in the Petrie Collection, a porch is shewn on the north (1807).

old fifteenth-century design, while the windows inserted in the east walls of the transepts—original three-light windows with cusped heads enclosed under a late segmental arch—are pleasing, although of no great distinction. The same remark applies to the windows of the nave aisles, cusped two-light windows under a square dripstone, original work in part, but, like much of the building, repeatedly ill-restored.

The lower stage of the tower forms a porchway, and it possesses two fifteenth-century doors. Of these the outermost has been almost completely restored. The inner, however, is much better preserved, owing, of course, to its protected position, and consists of two half-rounds separated by a wide and deep casement. These rise from a slightly moulded plinth. The original wooden door remains, with one or two vestiges of its old ironwork, and is indented here and there with bullet-holes, ascribed, as usual, to Cromwell and the Civil War, though due more probably to some mischievous farm hand.

The two massive buttresses with their plinths of Kentish marble are also fifteenth-century work. There is only one set-off at present, but they both originally extended much higher.

The most curious parts of the church still remain to be described. They are the two pent-house structures flanking the tower north and south. Similar additions to the tower can be seen at New Romney,* Milford-on-Sea,† Sandhurst, and Seaford, while they also existed at the priory church of St. Radegund, Bradsole, near Dover,‡ though in this last example, the tower being on the north side of the church, the additions were made on the east and west sides of the tower.

The lean-to erections at New Romney are ascribed to the late twelfth century, those at Milford to the thirteenth century, but seemingly the similar structures at Teynham are quite late; how late it is difficult to say, the walling

* See plan, *Arch. Cant.*, Vol. XIII., p. 466 *et seq.*
† See the *Antiquary*, vol. 47 (N.S. vii.), pp. 215 *et seq*, 253 *et seq.*
‡ See plan, *Arch Cant.*, Vol. XIV., between pages 144 and 145.

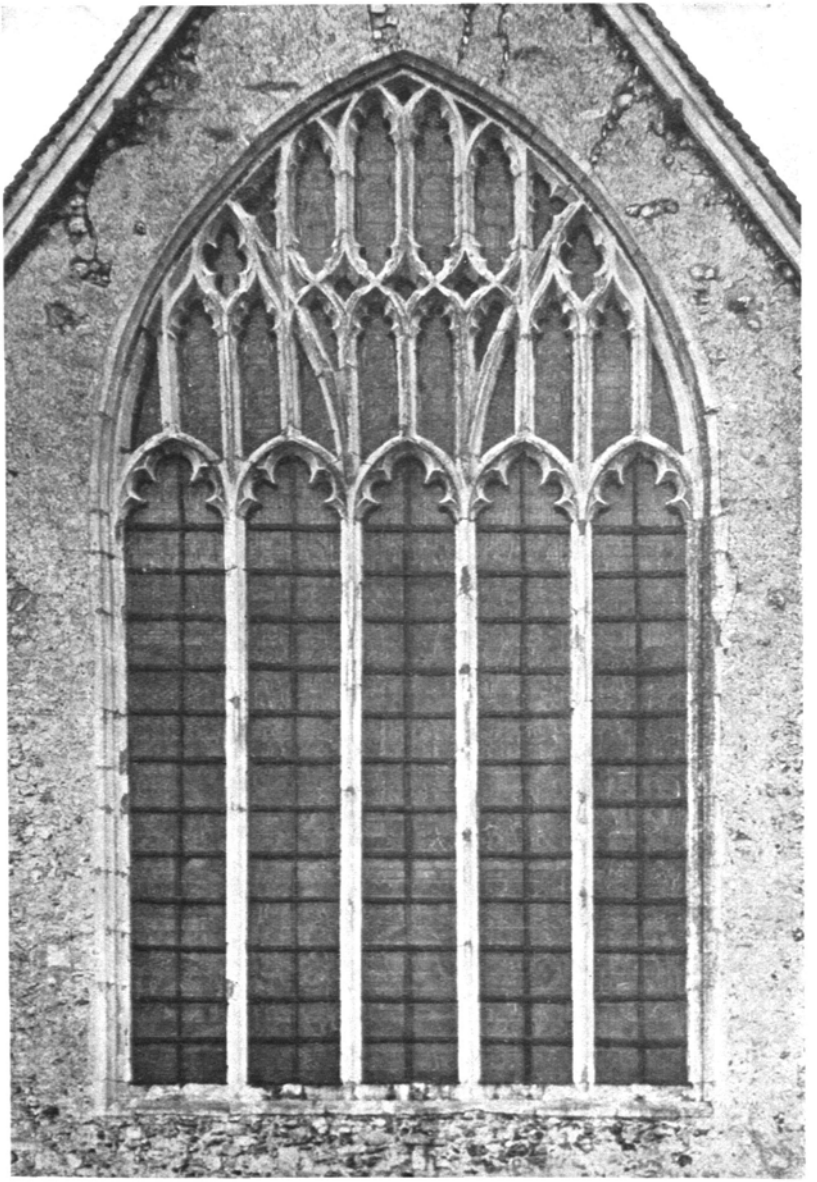

Photo *Aymer Vallance*

TEYNHAM CHURCH

Tracery of East Window, showing the iron furniture complete.

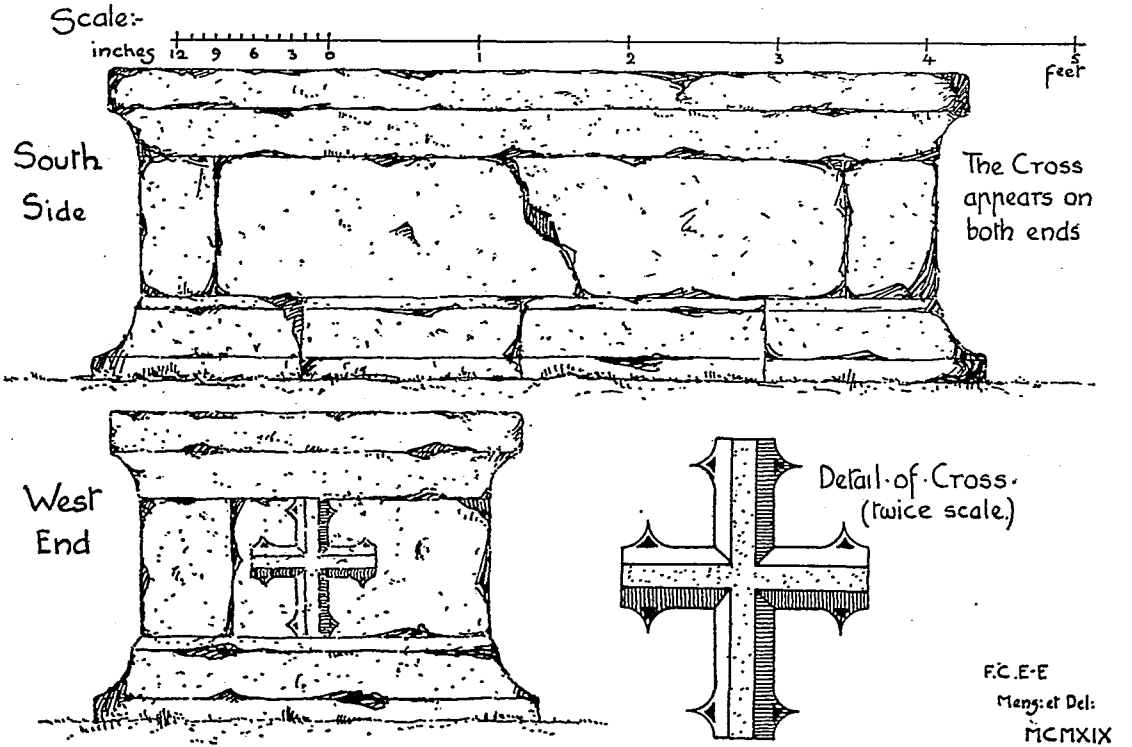

Fig. 4.—TEYNHAM CHURCH.
Altar Tomb in the Churchyard.

being of a most miscellaneous nature and composed of re-used material of all periods. But the partition walls, separating the aisles from the pent-houses, are in part of timber and plaster work, suggestive of the sixteenth or early seventeenth century, and it may be surmised that at this period the original west terminations of the aisles were taken down and the material re-used in bringing the present western facade to line with the western tower. This would therefore, as has been already indicated, explain the presence and origin of the thirteenth-century lancets in their present position. The removed wall was replaced by the existing one, which, in its upper part, is of timber and plaster.

There is also a photograph of the church that I have seen—though I cannot give at the moment any reference to it or its date—which gives the impression that these pent-houses at one time extended north and south beyond the line of the aisle walls.

Various explanations of these additions have been given, but in the case under consideration the present use, that of a vestry, is in all probability the original one. The south addition is now utilized as a means of access to the tower, a wooden stairway leading to a doorway of thirteenth-century character (this, however, has been inserted) which gives access to the ringing stage.

Though not having any structural connection with the architecture of the church, the altar-tomb outside the west door (Fig. 4) should be noticed. In its admirable proportions, its reticence in ornament, and its entire suitability for its purpose, there is very little unfortunately to be found in our country churchyards that will compare with this monument for simple dignity. It is probably of the late fifteenth century, but bears no name nor date.

There is also the base of an ancient churchyard cross [to which a shaft and head have recently been added by Dr. G. Prideaux Selby in memory of his eldest son, killed in the late war.—Ed.].

In conclusion, it must not be forgotten that, if architectural evidence for the early church be not entirely satisfactory,

other evidence would tend to shew that from very early times a community has had its home in these parts. The original village was undoubtedly situated on the small creek that flows into the Swale, but it has since moved southward, nearer to the main road, owing to the gradual silting up of the creek and the closing of that line of communication. From the abundant evidence of Roman material built into the church, and also found elsewhere more or less *in situ*, the place was fairly populous in the early part of the historic period, and, judging from the name of the village, the site was inhabited in Saxon times. Thus it is probable enough that the demand for a Christian church rose quite early, and that the oldest building whose lines can be traced in the present church was not the earliest to occupy the same spot.

Additional Notes by the Editor.

At the end of the fifteenth or early in the sixteenth century a rood-loft was introduced. It was approached from the ground at its north end, the site of the entrance stair being yet indicated by a cavity, rudely hollowed in the wall at the southern extremity of the east wall of the north arm of the transept. This recess is about 3 feet wide, its depth varying from 6½ inches to 10½ inches. The hollow contains no traces of steps, the rood-stair having consisted possibly of a wooden ladder, or spiral-treads of wood partly contained in the cavity and partly projecting into the transept. To provide a passage thence on to the rood-loft, which was situated just to west of the chancel opening, the east spandrel of the arch between the central crossing and the north transept is pierced at a level of 11 feet 6 inches above the floor by a slanting passage tunnelled through the hollow of the wall, and having a four-centred doorway, about 2 feet wide by 5 feet 6 inches high, opening into the central crossing. At the opposite end of the rood-loft, at a level of 11 feet 8 inches above the nave floor, another aperture 1 foot 7 inches wide by 5 feet 10 inches high, tunnelled

through the east spandrel of the arch between the crossing and the transept's south arm, gives access to the latter in the north-east angle of the same. The object of this opening, from which there is no sign whatever of any steps having descended to the floor, is not quite obvious. The existence, however, of a stone corbel, some 3 feet 2 inches below the opening, seems to suggest that there was, connected with the rood-loft, a transverse gallery spanning the northern end of the south transept from east to west. The corbel is 9 inches wide and has a projection of 5½ inches from the face of the wall. It is distant 3 feet 3 inches from the northern limit of the south transept. The flood of light from the large east window, inserted in the fifteenth century, interfering with the satisfactory display of the Great Rood in the chancel-arch, the upper part of the latter was filled in with a solid partition of boards, shutting out the halation, which otherwise would have obstructed the view from the west. The narrow groove for the tympanum boarding is yet visible near the western edge of the soffit of the chancel-arch. Also just behind, or east of, the said groove may be seen five holes or chases (now stopped with cement), viz., one at the apex and two on either side, lower down, in the haunches of the arch. These chases were cut into the stonework to receive the stout wooden framework of the thin boarding. Below, in the chancel opening, which is 19 feet 4 inches wide, there stands the northern half of the rood-screen wainscot, cut down to the level of the middle rail. This wainscot, 3 feet 11 inches high, measures 7 feet 2 inches long, and consists of two compartments centring at 3 feet 5½ inches, divided each into three panels, centring from 1 foot ½ inch to 1 foot 1 inch. The entire absence of tracery, or any other characteristic architectural feature, makes it difficult to assign a date to this screenwork, which is perhaps no earlier than the sixteenth century. The southern half of the wainscot is a modern reproduction.

Just beyond the east jamb of the middle window on the north side of the chancel, 14½ inches above the string-course, is an iron ring; and, although there is none on the opposite

side of the chancel, there may be discerned a slight irregularity in the wall, as though there had been at one time a corresponding fixture. Provided that there were two such rings in pre-Reformation days, since they would be in exactly the right position, they could only have been meant for the cords of the Lenten veil, which was suspended across the chancel, in front of the high altar.

Of all the ancient painted glass, known to have existed at one time in Teynham Church, the greater part has vanished, but fragments remain in two of the windows of the north arm of the transept, where Dr. Francis Grayling, in his Kentish volumes of the "County Churches" series (1913), notes "a lancet filled with odd pieces, a ship, etc.," and, "in an opposite, fifteenth century window, a mitre above a shield charged with cross counterchanged," and also "a little old fifteenth century glass" in the window of the south end of the transept.

In the floor of the south arm of the transept is an engraved latten silhouetted figure of a man in armour, believed to be John Frogenhall, 1444, though the inscription below the feet, which rest upon a greyhound, is missing. Round his neck is a collar of S S, so called, the badge of the line of Lancaster, from Henry IV.'s motto *souverayne*, which is painted upon the edges of his tester in Canterbury Cathedral.

Dr. Grayling enumerates three other latten, or brass, engravings, viz.: a civilian, 1509; a small latten of a civilian, 1533; and a civilian and wife, 1639. He further notes "amongst a group of children (brass), in the north" arm of the transept, "a chrisom child."

The communion table is Elizabethan; and the pulpit, mounted on a modern and ill-according base, is of the earlier half of the seventeenth century.

In the south aisle wall, near the floor, is an iron ring with two short lengths of a linked chain attached, the purpose of which offers interesting matter for speculation.

AYMER VALLANCE.

May 1919.