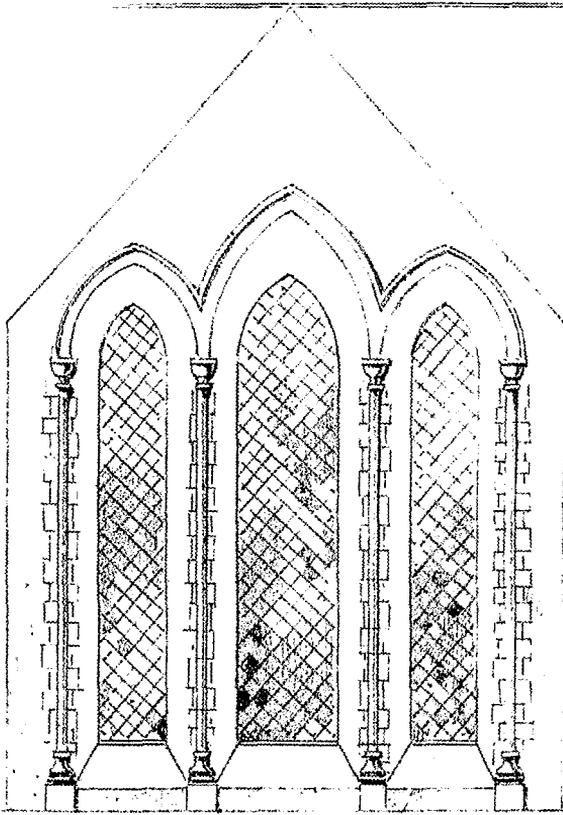


## CHISLET CHURCH.

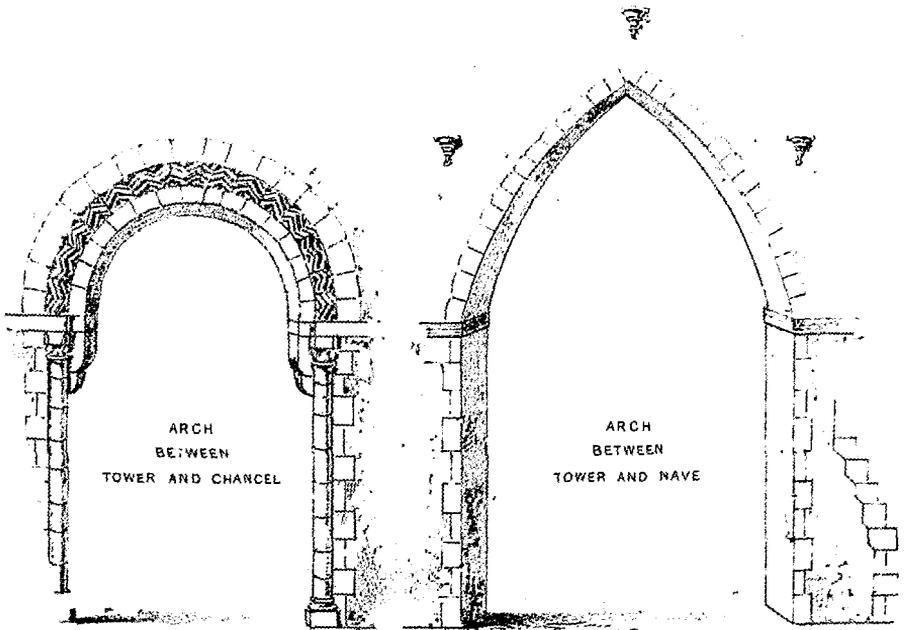
BY FREDERICK SLATER.

CHISLET CHURCH is of Norman architecture, of the twelfth century, and has a nave 47ft. by 20ft. (inside), with a tower at its east end, which opens into the chancel through a fine Norman arch. There was originally a similar arch from the nave to the tower, the foundations of which were discovered, under the pavement, during the restoration of the church in 1866. Nothing was found to shew what the original Norman chancel may have been, but in the exterior masonry of the present chancel may be seen wrought Caen stones, which appear to have been used in the original building. The Norman chancel arch, still remaining (Pl. I), has had its piers cut away for about two-thirds of their height from the floor at some period, probably later than the alterations and additions to the nave and aisles, which will be noticed further on. The surfaces of the piers were left quite rough, as though hacked with a common bricklayers' hammer. They were made smooth, and finished off as at present seen, during the restoration in 1866.

The tower, 17ft. by 17ft. (inside), has two Norman windows, with deep splays of a date corresponding with the alterations of the nave, the Norman character of the windows being retained on the outside. The Norman windows in the belfry have been preserved entire, that is, with their original splays.



EAST WINDOW OF CHANCEL.



CHISLET CHURCH.

On the south side, within the tower, is a Norman doorway (Plate II) with a wooden lintel, leading to the belfry, which is reached by the Norman stairs; the turret has narrow slits for light, as well as a larger window below, to light the entrance. This larger window was stopped up when the south aisle was added to the nave. The entrance to the belfry turret was from the inside only. During a later period an entrance to the belfry turret from the outside was constructed. The bells, which are six in number, bear the names of the donors or their founders, with dates. The shingled wood-work, a later addition, surmounting the Norman tower, is the base of a spire, which was either never completed or was taken down, from the inability of the tower to support its weight.

The nave, before its aisles were added, had Norman windows of considerable size, placed high in the walls. Some of them were brought to light during the work of restoration in 1866, and one of them is preserved in the south arcade of the nave. Worked Caen stones, from the other windows, built into the walls over and round the nave arches, were seen when the plaister was removed at the restoration. Remains of the Norman west door, and west window splays, were discovered at the same time. The Norman church evidently consisted of a simple nave, a central tower, and chancel.

The present chancel and the north and south aisles of the nave, with the arch between the nave and the tower, belong to the Early English style of the thirteenth century. The new tower-arch appears to have afforded a better view of the new chancel, and the Norman arch leading into the chancel was probably cut away with the same intention. When

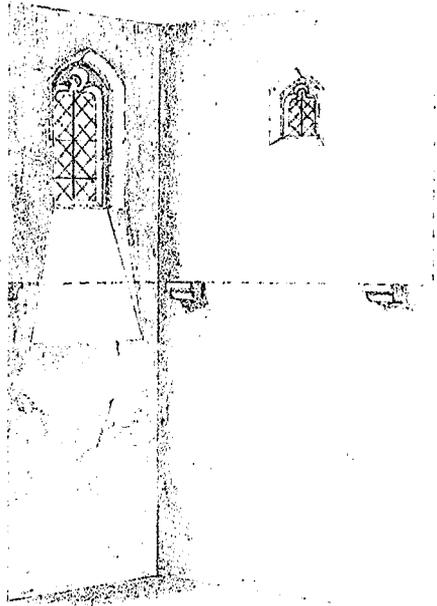
the Early English aisles were added, the walls of the Norman nave were simply cut through, and large portions of them were left to form piers of support to the arches of the aisles.

The aisles measure 8ft. by 47ft. inside. At the west end of the north aisle was a priest's room (Plate II), one of the chief features of interest in this church. The windows and corbels which supported the floor still remain. The sill of the western window is so much splayed downwards as to admit light into the aisle, beneath the floor of the priest's upper chamber. The north window of the chamber is extremely small. There is a stoup for holy water at the north door of the church. The window at the east end of this aisle was discovered and opened at the restoration in 1866. A side altar existed at the east end of each aisle, as is proved by the piscina at the end of the north aisle, and the aumbrye in the south wall near the end of the south aisle. The belfry stairs stood in the way of an eastern window for the south aisle.

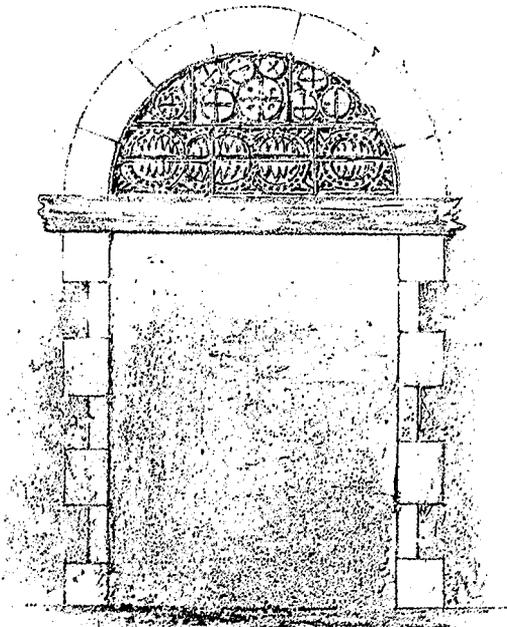
The window frames and tracery in the aisles and at the west end of nave were of Kentish rag stone, and were so much dilapidated that at the restoration in 1866 they were replaced in new Bath stone.

In the south pier of the arch to the tower is seen a curious arrangement of stepped stone work (Plate I), which has not been explained. It might have been required to give room for stairs to the rood loft, or a passage-way to the tower by the side of the Norman arch; at all events, the wall is here cut away. On the north pier of the same arch may be seen quoin stones of a supposed doorway, now left unplastered for observation. By looking at the arch which leads into the chancel, it may be seen that there would not be room,

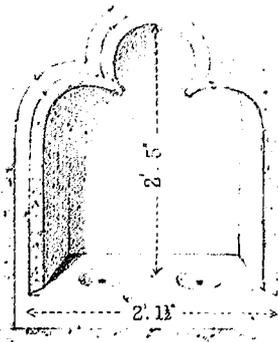
NOTE.—The window sill, so splayed as to admit light to the aisle beneath the floor of upper chamber.



WEST END OF NORTH AISLE, SHEWING SITE OF PRIEST'S UPPER CHAMBER



SOUTH DOORWAY, WITH WOODEN LINTEL IN THE TOWER.



PISCINA IN CHANCEL.

CHISLET CHURCH.

between the quoin stones and the wall, for a door or passage, without cutting into the wall. Over the arch, between the nave and the tower, are three well-moulded brackets for images.

The west window of the nave is of later date, being of the Perpendicular style. The font is interesting, being carved with representations of traceried windows. It had been removed for many years, and was used at a farm for a cattle trough. It was restored to its original position at the restoration of the church in 1866. The substitute for this font had been constructed of bricks and cement.

The chancel, 20ft. by 37ft. (inside), has three lancet windows on the south side and three on the north side, and its eastern window is a lancet triplet (Plate I). All these windows have been recently filled with painted glass, representing Biblical incidents from the Old Testament on the north side, and from the New Testament on the south. In the east window the Passion of our Lord is depicted. Over the north and south windows are labels terminating in human heads, admirably executed and worthy of close examination. There are sedilia, of three seats, and a double piscina (Plate II) on the south side, and west of them is a door leading into the churchyard. On the north side of the chancel is a door leading to the vestry (the old sacristy). The present vestry was added at the restoration in 1866. Beneath the vestry is the furnace room and boiler for heating the church with hot water. The painted decoration of the reredos and chancel was the work of amateur parishioners, done at the request of the Rev. Robert Johnson, the Vicar, in 1872 and 1873.

Built into the churchyard wall, near the east end

of the chancel, may be seen the original cross from the Norman church. The cross on the present chancel was broken, and replaced by a new one in 1866. A copy of the original is depicted on the splay of the centre chancel window-sill, and the mitre and arms of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the other window-sills. The Archbishop is rector and patron of the vicarage.

Two curious old alms boxes, bearing the date 1679, are preserved in the vestry, which were constantly used until 1866, when collecting bags were substituted. The Registers commence in 1538, and in those of the seventeenth century there are notices of collections made in the church in obedience to various Royal Briefs :—

	£	s.	d.
There was a Brief for building St. Paul's Cathedral, London, 1607. Collected - - - - -	1	6	8½
A Brief for St. Albans, 1680. Collected - - - - -	0	13	1
A Brief for the distressed Protestants in Poland, 1680 -	0	5	0
A Brief for distressed Protestants out of France, 1681 -	1	6	9
A Brief for distressed Protestants, 1690 - - - - -	1	9	7

The Rev. Dr. Haslewood, Vicar of Chislet, has kindly furnished the following extracts (obtained by one of his predecessors) respecting the endowment of the Vicarage of Chislet :—

EXCERPTA E MS<sup>to</sup> IN BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA ASSERVATO, ET  
NUMERATO MS. TANNER 127, Page 327.

The Ordination of the Vicarage of Chistlet taken from the Chronicle of W<sup>m</sup> Thorn once a Monk of S<sup>t</sup> Augustine's Abbey at Cant', to which Abbey the mannor their anciently belonged: the same Ordination is Extant and may be found in the Archbishop's Registry att the Vicar General's office in libro Stratfoord.

Johannes permissione divina Cantuariensis Archiepiscopus totius Angliæ primas et Apostolicæ sedis legatus, cunctis Christi fidelibus

salutem consequi sempeternam: Nuper religiosos viros Abbatem et conventum Monasterii S. Augustini Cant' Ecclesiam Parochialem de Chistlet nostræ Cantuariensis diocæsis in proprios usus tenentes juxta juris exigentiam moneri fecimus et induci, ut ipsi infra certum terminum per nos præfixum Domino Edmundo perpetuo ejusdem Ecclesiæ Vicario et Vicariæ suæ ad quam cum vacaverit iidem religiosi debent, ut dicitur, secularem clericum in ea instituendum præsentare sufficientem, assignarent de ipsius Ecclesiæ fructibus, redditibus et obventibus portionem, de qua ipse Vicarius et successores sui in dicta Ecclesia Vicarii possent congrue sustentari, jura Episcopalia solvere, & alia ipsi Vicario et Vicariis inibi instituendis incumbentia onera supportare. Qui quidem Religiosi prætextu nostræ monitionis prædictæ per Literas eorum patentes sigillo suo signatas portionem hujusmodi in & de decimis, oblationibus, proventibus et rebus aliis infra scriptis ad dictam Ecclesiam de Chistlet spectantibus præfato Edmundo Vicario et ipsius successoribus in dicta Ecclesia Vicariis quatenus in iis extitit assignarunt, et per partem ipsorum in presentia Dicti Vicarii judicialiter fuit petitum portionem ipsam seu vicariam hujusmodi per Commissarium nostrum in Decimis, oblationibus, obventibus, proventibus, et rebus aliis infra scriptis hujusmodi, constitui et perpetualiter ordinari ac iisdem Vicariis imponi Onera infra scripta: Unde idem Commissarius noster quod per ipsos sic rationabiliter actum erat, prout decuit, approbans, et de ipsarum consensu partium et ipsis præsentibus decrevit, ac ordinavit judicialiter sub hac forma. Quod viz' Vicarius præfatus Ecclesiæ de Chistlet qui nunc est et successores sui in dicta Ecclesia Vicarii habeant mansum solitum dictæ Vicariæ cum Gardino adjacente eidem: Item habeant et percipiant nomine Vicariæ prædictæ omnes et omnimodas oblationes in dicta Ecclesia de Chistlet et in quibuscunque locis infra fines et limites seu Decimationes dictæ Ecclesiæ situatis, ex donatione divina qualitercunque factas aut faciendas, seu ad eam vel in ea provenientes et in posterum provenire valentes modo, causa, occasione vel colore, quibuscunque habeant insuper et (*sic*) percipiant dicti Vicarii, nomine quo supra, omnes decimas lanæ, Agnorum, Vitulorum, Anserum, Porcellorum, Columbarum, casei, lacticinii, Canabis, Lini, mercimoniorum, pomorum, pyrorum, Ortorum, Oborum, pasturæ, Salis de xv Salcotes vulgariter nuncupati, omnesque alias minutas decimas, qualitercunque spectantes et pertinentes seu provenientes et proventuras ad Ecclesiam antedictam, nec non quæcunque legata relicta aut reliquenda in posterum prædictæ Ecclesiæ, quæ ipsius rectores seu Vicarii possent de jure vel

consuetudine percipere & habere. Item habeant et percipiant dicti Vicarii nomine Vicariæ predictæ a Religiosis ejusdem apud Chistlet unum pondus sive Way casei nomine Decimarum, Vaccarum et Ovium dictorum religiosorum infra dictam parochiam de Chistlet depascentium, ac etiam Decimam de Venatione parci dictorum Religiosorum apud Chistlet, et Decimam Molendinorum eorum infra parochiam antedictam existentium tum tradantur et dimittantur (*sic*) ad firmam, quæ per tempus aliquod eidem Vicario per dictos Religiosos indebitè substracta fuerunt. Subeant autem Vicarii præfati onus deservendi per se aut alium Presbyterum idoneum præfatae ecclesiæ in divinis; onus insuper solutionis Decimarum et Impositionum aliarum, quæ Anglicanæ ecclesiæ imponi quâocumque seu per quemcunque Contingent seu ipsi Ecclesiæ de Chistlet incumbent pro taxatione centum solidorum suis sumptibus subeant et expensis: Onera vero reparationis et refectionis Cancelli præfatae Ecclesiæ de Chistlet intus et exterius, nec non inventionis et reparationis librorum, vestimentorum et ornamentorum ecclesiæ ejusdem quæ per Ecclesiarum rectores invenire et reparari debent de jure vel consuetudine ac cetera onera ordinaria et extraordinaria eidem ecclesiæ incumbentia præfato Vicario superius non adscripta dicti Religiosi subeant perpetim et agnoscant. Quæ omnia et singula nos præfatus Archiepiscopus approbantes ea autoritate nostra Ordinaria approbamus, reservantes nobis et successoribus nostris Archiepiscopis Cantuariensibus dictam Vicariam augmentandi et diminuendi, si et quando nobis et iis expedire videbitur plenariam potestatem in quorum Testimonium Sigillum nostrum fecimus apponi. Dat. apud Lambeth Idus Februarii Anno Domini mcccxiv. & nostræ Translationis decimo tertio.

This is a true Copie taken and examined by M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Somner Notary publick.

[The volume of Papers whence these extracts are copied formerly belonged to Archbishop Sancroft [1677-90]; many pages in it are in his handwriting.]