

WALL PAINTINGS IN THE CHURCH OF
ALL SAINTS, FRINDSBURY.

ROCHESTER, 18 *June* 1883.

DEAR MR. SCOTT ROBERTSON,

The reparation of Frindsbury Church was commenced on Wednesday last; the chancel being the first portion taken in hand. Sometime ago there were found, under the external plaster, traces of a triplet of Norman windows at the front, and a single light on each side. These have now been opened. As was to be expected from windows blocked up so long ago as the fifteenth century, when new and larger windows were inserted, the jambs are adorned with very fine and perfect painted figures of saints and good folk. Each jamb has a single figure about 4 feet high, painted in pink, red, yellow, and black, on a thin coat of wash covering the Norman plastering. The window on the north side has on the west jamb a nimbed saint, in albe, amice, and red chasuble, holding a pastoral staff (crook) in his left hand, and a fetter in his right. At present I cannot identify him. He appears to be St. Leonard, vested in a chasuble as abbot instead of the dalmatic as a deacon. The east jamb has a tall figure of an archbishop, in albe, dalmatic, amice, fanon, and white chasuble, gloves, sandals, and pallium, plain white mitre with pink bands, holding a cross-staff in his left hand; his right hand in attitude of benediction. He has a short beard, but no nimbus; he is to be identified by his name: s: EADMU[ND]AS painted above him. Of course this is St. Edmund of Abingdon, Archbishop of Canterbury 1234-40, who was sainted in 1247. There were altars to him in the crypts of Rochester and Canterbury before the end of the thirteenth century.

The south light has on the west jamb a bishop, in white vestment, holding a crook; but he is very much faded, and nothing more can be made out. The saint opposite to

him appears to have been a female, but wears a cap. This figure is nimbed, but *not* the bishop; the rest is almost faded out. Of the eastern triplet, only the side lights are left, and but half of the north one. Of the south about three-fifths. On the jamb of the north light is a most perfect figure of St. Laurence, in albe; amice, white fretty red; and dalmatic, barry white and red, fringed and lined with grey blue. On his left arm hangs a red fanon, lined grey blue. In his left hand is a yellow palm branch, and in the right his gridiron. He has red stockings and pointed black shoes. In the south light, the fragment of the north jamb shews a nimbed figure, apparently of a woman, in pink underdress and slate blue robe. She held some object towards the right in both hands. Was she St. Mary Magdalene? The south jamb shews a most vigorous and perfect figure (un-nimbed) of a Palmer, who wears a pink underrobe, with white puffing beneath its sleeves along the arm, and a dark red supertunic. In his right hand he carries a yellow *bourdon* shod with iron. In the left hand, which is uplifted, is a closed book. A square black wallet hangs on his left arm. The neck is bare. He has yellow hair, and short beard, and his head covered by the regular black flap hat, turned up with pink, with pendent strings. Each figure stands on a yellow mound, and the background has been stencilled with red flowers of six petals.

Methinks these figures date from 1256, when Bishop Laurence de St. Martin obtained a grant of Frindsbury Church from the Prior and Convent of Rochester (see *Reg. Roff.*, 66), and in the same year obtained the canonization of St. William of Perth. I take it that the bishop is Bishop Laurence; the good deacon, his patron saint; the pilgrim, St. William (unless he be St. James, but there is no nimbus).

A small piscina has been uncovered inserted within an earlier one of Norman date; and a small plastered recess in the west wall on the north side of the chancel arch.

Yours sincerely,

W. H. ST. J. HOPE.