

REVIEWS.

THE CARE OF CHURCHES : THEIR UPKEEP AND PROTECTION.

*The Care of Churches : their Upkeep and Protection : being the Eighth Report of the Central Council of Diocesan Advisory Committees for the care of churches. Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 1940. 2s. 6d.*

THIS Report, well produced and printed on substantial paper with many beautiful illustrations, might strike the reader at first sight as over-elaborate for the present crisis. A study of it gives him so much enjoyment that he ceases to be critical. He may recognize, too, the sop to economy provided by the advertisements, one of which confronts the List of Council Members with " a record of good stewardship," claimed by an ecclesiastical insurance office, but certainly characteristic of their own administration.

The Report has indeed almost a dramatic appeal. Turning its pages one is haunted by dread lest this building, monument, wall-painting, above all this ancient glass, so carefully restored, no longer survives to delight the eyes of the generations which are to inherit peace.

The problem of conserving artistic treasures becomes constantly more urgent, " in the face of an enemy bent on senseless destruction," and indeed since the report was published, the list of lost and damaged churches has grown tragically long. The Council's offices, and the Registers, plate and other valuables in their care, have found a refuge " in what is regarded as a very safe district." An organization has also been set up, to be known as the Central Institute of Art and Design, to protect the interests of artists and architects, so that creative work may continue without a break into more propitious times.

The Report naturally hinges upon the highly important Faculty Jurisdiction Measure (1938) which gave legal status to Diocesan Advisory Committees, grouped around a representative Central Council. Henceforward in every diocese such a committee " must exist and must function." The

Measure, in fact, gave permanency to a state of affairs which had gradually evolved since the Great War. Since that upheaval Church authorities more and more have considered themselves bound "to give due protection to historic and artistic values"; this obligation is now recognized by the law of the land.

A useful section of the Report describes the new system in detail and tersely summarizes what it has already accomplished.

The Council desires that the work of the Advisory Committees should become better known to the general public; a propaganda campaign had been planned, of necessity abandoned, "for the duration"; but their report is in the meantime valuable and enlightening.

The sections of greatest interest deal with recent work in parish churches throughout the two Provinces, and to a lesser extent in the cathedrals, and summarize the contribution generously made by the Pilgrim Trust.

References in the Report to Kent churches are not very numerous, and the reviewer may be allowed a general survey of its contents, if only as a source of intriguing ideas for archæological holidays in days to come.

"Attention," says the Report, "should be drawn to the great amount of work on the preservation of monuments, ancient glass, and paintings . . . carried on in this country in recent years. It is surprising that with all the money lavished on church fabrics and new fittings in the nineteenth century, so little should have been done for artistic treasures of this kind."

It is pleasant hearing that "in glass and in paintings much of this neglect has now been made good." A photograph of the fine fourteenth-century glass of local workmanship at Kinwarton in Warwickshire, lately repaired, shows a *Madonna and Child* of great charm. A window of the same date at Willesborough is also depicted; it contains nearly all its original glass, which is now properly displayed by the removal of a slanting roof outside, formerly cutting across it. Two very remarkable instances are given of skilful rearrangement. The magnificent fifteenth century glass in the great

west window at Cirencester was in danger of falling and urgently needed releading. It was known that early in the nineteenth century all the stained glass remaining in the church had been put together in the east and west windows. A careful study of documents proved it possible to trace the original windows for which the glass was made, and "in many cases the exact tier of lights has been established and the order of arrangement in each tier." In the event, only four fifteenth century canopies proved to belong to the west window, which has been "reglazed in clear quarries"; the stained glass—one is glad to learn—has been buried in a place of safety.

In the Tyrrell Chapel, at Gipping in Norfolk, a disorder of coloured fragments in the upper part of the east window (with clear glass in the lower part) has been redistributed to fill the whole space. "Pieces of figures that were scattered have been brought together. It was found that St. Mary and St. John formed part of a crucifixion scene, the centre panel of which had gone, save a fragment of the cross. These figures have been arranged in their relative positions, and other fragments so disposed as to suggest the original plan. In the case of other figures, fragments have been set out in right relation to each other, and connected by modern glass just sufficiently painted . . . to produce an intelligible appearance without any conjectural restoration in imitation of old work."

St. Peter's Church, at Chorley, through a donor's liberality, has been enriched by "some magnificent late medieval and early Renaissance French glass," which, in the uncertain future of such treasures in France itself, may well come to have an enhanced value.

Work upon the conservation of wall-paintings has been, in the period under review, perhaps less sensational. At Hawkedon, in Suffolk, a curious representation of the Transfiguration, a subject rare in English churches, has been dealt with and is here illustrated. It is a primitive drawing, but the treatment of the subject "suggests some knowledge of the mystical traditions of Eastern Christianity"—Great Canfield, in the Chelmsford diocese, possesses a fine thirteenth

century Madonna upon which Professor Tristram has been at work. This, and wall paintings of the same date at Selling, owe their preservation to the Pilgrim Trust.

The conservation of monuments has restored to beauty some fine fourteenth and fifteenth century alabaster tombs in the Hilton Chapel at Swine, which are fully illustrated. On the pediment the pairs of angels who kneel on fald-stools, bearing up between them shields of arms, are noteworthy. The revival of interest in Renaissance and Georgian art, to which the Report calls special attention, is particularly noticeable in the case of monuments in churches and cathedrals. The Purveye monument at Wormley Church, in Hertfordshire, and the Hoby memorials at Bisham are good examples of the miracle which cleaning and polishing can effect upon marbles and alabaster dulled by time and neglect.

Many instances are given of treasures re-discovered, or restored to their original setting. At Bridgwater some carved canopy work, used as the base of a lectern, proved to have beneath it the remains of vaulting and is, perhaps, to be connected with a hanging pyx for the reserved sacrament. The monument of a nun belonging to the famous house of Saxon foundation at Wherwell, in Hampshire, together with part of a pre-Norman cross-shaft and some "sculptured scenes of high quality" has been rescued from exposure on the churchyard wall and brought into the church itself, which was rebuilt in the nineteenth century.

Several old fonts have been recovered. At Seend "the fifteenth century font, with its sub-base, had been buried, probably for safety." Its hiding place was found and it will be repaired and re-used.

A fine gallery and staircase, lent to the Geffreyes Museum, has been re-installed in the Church of St. Augustine-with-St. Faith, Old Change. An offer by the Victoria and Albert Museum to hand back to Great Bedwyn the early wood-screen, loaned for exhibition, could not be accepted. The recognition that such objects are not "Museum specimens" is timely indeed. Much good work has also been done in replacing brasses in or near their original sites. At St. Margaret's, King's Lynn, the two famous Walsoken and

Braunche brasses "now lie in their original stones, raised about 18 inches above the level of the floor . . . where the light is good and each brass can be examined without fear of damage to the other."

Attention has been given to ancient bells and there is mention of a fine 1616 tenor bell at Bayton in the Salisbury diocese, which was so badly cracked by a fall it had to be re-cast. On the waist was a shield "bearing the royal arms in a garter, with helmet, crest and mantling, set in a panel bordered at the sides with grape-vine"; the emblems of the Passion above and the words "Be Ye Mery Al" below. This part was cut out before re-casting and will be preserved in the church as a record of the old bell. In sharp contrast with this old-time memory is the request of St. John's, Weymouth, for the installation of gramophone records in place of their bells, which cannot be rung without danger to the tower. The threat of "synthetic bells," merely to be "switched on," to time-honoured bell-ringing is fully realized.

Particularly encouraging are the references in the Report to fine examples of modern craftsmanship, such as the "great and noble monument," a recumbent effigy in Hopton Wood stone, erected in Wickmere Church to the late Earl of Orford; the "communal cloister" at Ashby St. Leger's, designed by Sir Edward Lutyens; Eric Kennington's effigy of T. E. Lawrence in Arab dress, to be placed in the Saxon Church of St. Martin, Wareham; and a fine Pietà in St. Mary's, Dorchester.

An echo of war problems is the Bishop of Salisbury's wise ruling against the placing of a siren on the tower of Sherborne Abbey, lest it should draw fire in case of an air attack.

The undoing of nineteenth century vandalisms finds a place upon many of these pages, and of great interest is the judicious re-arrangement of several modern churches, to improve their convenience, beauty and suitability.

A case in point is the new chancel, in contrasting style, added to the large Victorian Gothic nave of St. John Baptist, Greenhill, Harrow, making the church "one of the most

interesting modern buildings in the London diocese." This is illustrated on p. 35. We hear much, too, of the substitution of clear panes for "bad Victorian patterned glass," and of the restoration of ancient floor levels.

There are useful notes upon the flying of the Church Flag; the best and safest methods of electric lighting; with emphasis on the object of all illumination in churches, to enable the worshipper to read his book; and on the means of preserving ancient woodwork.

The Report is at once an enthralling record and a mine of practical information for those responsible for our parish churches, old and new.

D.G.

*History of Westcliffe Church. Compiled by R. R. Campbell, M.A. Price 6d.*

THIS comprehensive little guide which was published in 1938 is a good example of how much history and material of interest there is in even the smallest of our parishes. We are not told on the cover of the booklet which Westcliffe is meant but this important detail is cleared up in the Introduction, where we learn of the valuable work which the late Colonel Cavenagh did by publishing his researches on the history of the parish in the St. Margarets-at-Cliffe Parish Magazine. It is surprising how much painstaking work may be hidden in these magazines of small and local circulation.

The author divides his subject first into the early history of the church, claiming that faint traces of Saxon work may be seen in the walls of the chancel, and then speaks of Queen Eleanor of Castile's connection with the manor and her ownership of the advowson. The story of the Manor House (Wallet's Court) is told and the possibility that Queen Eleanor stayed there with some of her fifteen children. The existing house is an interesting but much altered and divided up brick structure of the earlier seventeenth century, with pilaster strips typical of the period. On the upper floor at the east end there is a fine brick-mullioned and transomed window, but this has been blocked up to take a fireplace with

its chimney. Internally there is some good woodwork. A wall painting in one room includes the Prince of Wales's feathers. This is presumably the recognition by the builder of the earlier royal connection. The main interest in the house to us is the fact—not a tradition—that the family of Edward Gibbon, the historian, owned it from 1573 to 1660. A skeleton pedigree of the family is given.

Further chapters give a more detailed description of the church, particulars of the vicars, who seem for some reason which is not gone into to have had no right to the small tithes; details of the archdeacon's visitations; and the post-Reformation union with St. Margarets-at-Cliffe, or of its existence as a separate entity. Chapter V treats more fully of the tithes and glebe lands, and to whom they were assigned; and the final one to burials in the church or churchyard. Appendix I supplies a list of the vicars, but not, unfortunately, of the patrons; and II an alphabetical catalogue of names in the register of burials. There are two curious mis-spellings of Archbishop Kilwardby as Kilbardby and Archdeacon Harpsfield as Hapsfield, but it can be gathered that the booklet as a whole gives a very complete account of a small and poor parish which must always have had a minute population. The number was 61 in 1801.