

St. Mary's Church, St. Neots, Huntingdonshire.

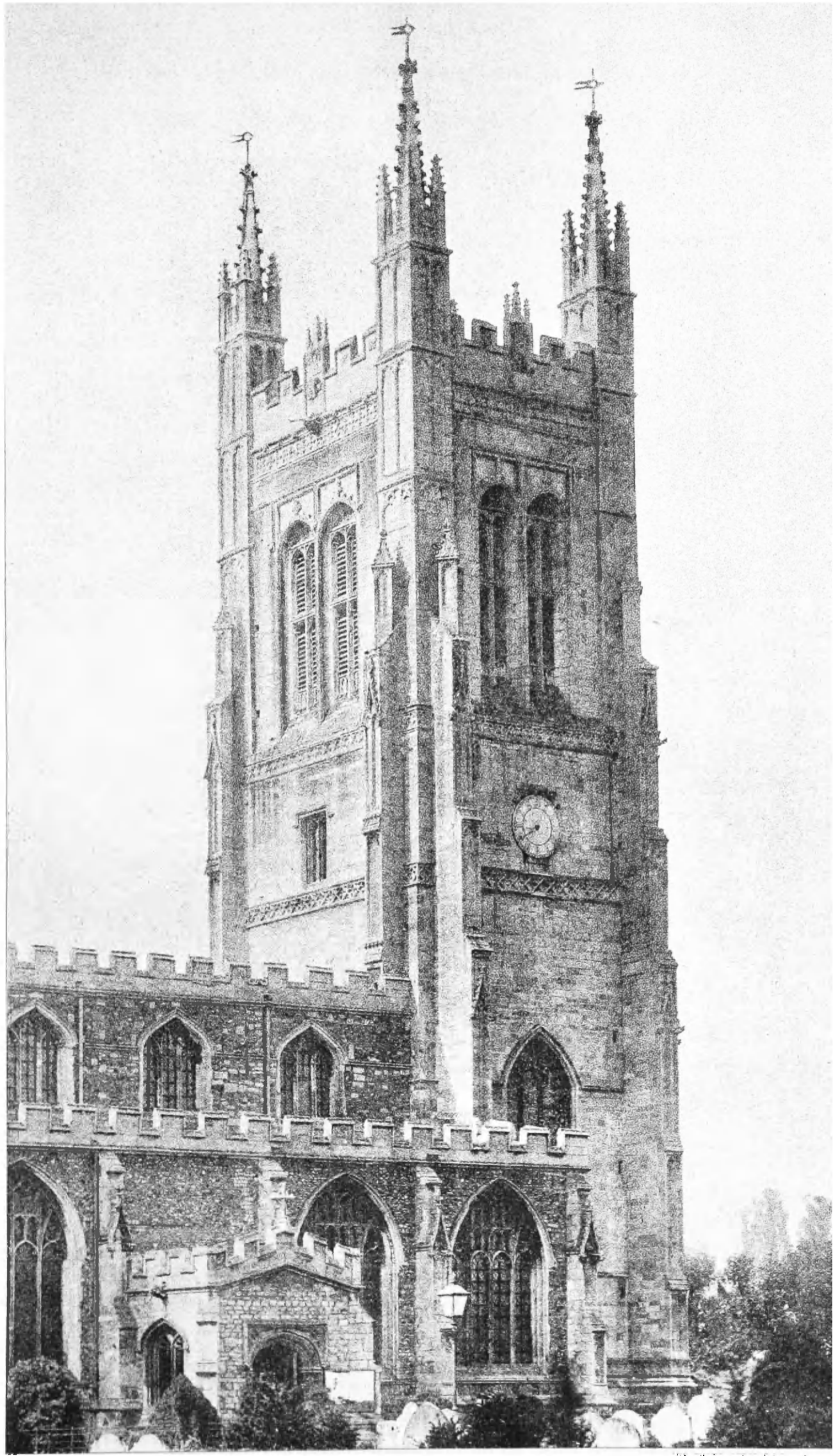
BY MR. S. FLINT CLARKSON, F.R.I.B.A.

Earlier Buildings.

As mentioned by the Rev. H. Fowler—in his very interesting “Notes on the Priory of St. Neots”—the great tithes of this parish were appropriated to the Priory by a Bull of Lucius III. before 1183. A church may have been erected on this site before that date. The shaft and the lower portions of the bowl of the existing font may have been made by some unskilful person in the 12th century for use in such a building, or it may have been brought from elsewhere. There are, however, no other indications of a building of earlier date than the end of the 12th century.

A window in the north wall of the vestry, originally a north window of the chancel, shows that a new chancel—if not a new church—was erected early in the Lancet period (1190-1245, E. Sharpe's nomenclature). The window is 11 inches wide, 5 feet 4 inches high, and consequently tall in proportion to its width, and has a sharply-pointed—about equilateral—head. A plinth of the same date is said to exist under the floor of the vestry; and the portion of the north wall of the chancel, through which the vestry door is pierced, may be wholly of the date of the window—that is, 1190 to 1200. The window formed part of the church mentioned in the grant of Hugh de Wells, Bishop of Lincoln between 1209 and 1234, which confirmed to the Prior and Convent “The Parochial Church of St. Mary in the town of St. Neots, with all its appurtenances.”

The foundations of the Perpendicular piers of the nave arcades are to be seen, and they are larger than the bases of the piers. It has been suggested that these foundations are older than the piers. The difference between foundation and pier is however not more than would often occur in modern work; but the floor would usually be made to suit the base, and the foundation would be kept out of sight. Probably the lowering of the floor in 1846 is responsible for the foundations being seen now. Besides, the foundations are of Weldon stone as well as the bases of the piers; if of earlier date, they would more probably have been Barnack. There is thus no evidence that the founda-



ST MARY'S CHURCH, ST NEOTS.
VIEW FROM NORTH EAST.

tions are older than the bases. One is inclined also to suppose that the earlier building was of small size, and that it was for that reason superseded—without much regret—by the present building designed on a larger scale. A slab of 14th century date with a cross and an inscription, now forming part of the floor of the Jesus Chapel, is another relic of the earlier church.

The Existing Church.

The existing church has a stately nave and well-developed chancel ; north and south aisles both to nave and chancel ; a vestry to the east of the north aisle of the chancel ; north and south porches to the nave aisles ; and a tower of grand proportions at the west end of the nave. The whole building was probably carried well forward in the 15th century, and completed in the 16th. Extracts of wills, for which probate was granted between 1485 and 1535, quoted by the Rev. G. C. Gorham in his "History and Antiquities of Eynesbury and S. Neots,"* point to an active interest in church and tower at that time. The bulk of the fabric of the church was probably in a forward state about 1489, and the tower not then commenced. In that year 3s. 4d. was left by a parishioner for work at the church,—and 5 marks (66s. 8d.) for "the Stepult."† Profusion of such, and even more liberal, gifts may have expanded the ideas of the authorities ; and led to the tower ignoring the church in a way that is simply humorous. The base courses and strings of tower and aisles make no pretence for ranging. The tower is faced with ashler externally throughout ; the church has stone quoins, dressings and strings, but has only rubble facing for the wall spaces.

The axis of the church is said (Rix's addenda to Gorham, p. clxxiv., *g*) to deviate by 14° from the place of sunrise on the festival of the Virgin Mary, to whom the church is dedicated. At the church of Eynesbury just by—also dedicated to the Virgin Mary—the deviation is 17°.

The *Nave* is 80 feet long and 22 feet wide in the clear, and has arcades of 5 bays, opening into north and south aisles, with tall moulded piers and highly pointed arches. The relation of the pier (2ft. 6in. across) to the bay (14ft. 3in. from centre to centre of pier) shows that the extreme of lightness aimed at in some late work was not

* See Note A on Page 42.

† See Note B on Page 43.

longed for here. The width of the piers is nearly one-fifth of the distance between them. The pier and arch afford good illustrations of the eager desire to have little difference in their size and form. Still the cap does go round the whole evenly—there are no mouldings continuing from arch to pier, as so commonly in later Perpendicular. A clerestory window of three lights occurs in each bay. The principals of the roof rest upon stone shafts running up the spandrels. The roof is of oak, and has carved cornices and other elaboration.

Dr. Rix remarks, (addenda to Gorham, p. clxxiv., *k*):—“the soldiers seem to have occupied themselves in shooting at the roof of the nave, which has an appearance of being wormeaten. The timber, however, is quite sound, and most of the holes still contain at a little depth a leaden shot,—not globular, but a section of a cylinder.” The royalist soldiers, about 120 in number, taken prisoners at the battle of 10th July, 1648, are credited with this amusement. The victors—the Parliamentarians—put the prisoners for greater security into St. Neots church, and kept them there well guarded for the day, and then they were sent to Hitchin. On the roof over the narrow bay next the chancel arch ancient colouring has been reproduced.

This narrow bay is an odd arrangement. The fifth of an arch abuts, without any preparation for it, against the east wall of the nave. The rood loft stair made a large respond on the north side, and there was a desire to avoid 3 feet of solid respond on the south, in order to bring St. Mary's Chapel more into view. The wall principal of the aisle roof is not properly received, and the whole has the air of a makeshift; perhaps it is as well that stern criticism makes us avoid such clumsy afterthoughts nowadays. The insertion of bits of hood moulds above the respond piers at the west end of the nave is another freak.

The staircase to the rood loft is carried up to a height sufficient to allow of a doorway for access to the gutters of the nave roof. As the turret is so prominent an object externally, a well-designed finish—as at Lavenham for instance—is much to be desired. The staircase is entered from the church by a door on the north of the chancel arch; and the blocked-up doorway which opened on the loft shows above. By wills of inhabitants of St.

Neots, between 1486 and 1500, benefactions from 6s. up to 40s. were available for the "Rode loffte." The blocked-up doorway in the south wall, ranging with the clerestory windows, was apparently reached from the rood loft, and was the only means of reaching the roof of the south aisle.

The space in the centre of the parapet of the east gable of the nave was arched over, and the *sanctus-bell* was hung in the space. It is a most interesting example. A deep groove, worn by the rope, is to be seen in the sill. The stooling for the base of a cross was found over the arch, and a new cross added, a few years ago.

The north and south *aisles of the Nave* have large four-light windows with sharply pointed heads—filled with fair Perp. tracery—in four of the bays; the north and south doorways occupy the middle bays of the five. It is said that all these windows were filled with stained glass in the old times, and that a good deal of it disappeared in the 17th century. The aisle roofs are also ancient.

A circular stone staircase is entered by a little door on the west of the south door; the staircase projects partly into the aisle. By it a room over the south porch is reached, called *Dove's Chamber*, containing a small theological library for the use of the clergy; Robert Dove was vicar from 1617 to 1622.

The *Chancel*, 49 feet by 17 feet, is reached from the nave through an arch of the same character and details as those of the nave arcades. The aisles extend for about two-thirds of the length of the chancel. The openings into them from the chancel are spanned by wide four-centred arches; the walls of the chancel are about 3 feet higher than the aisle walls, but space was required above the arches for figures, &c., under the roof principals, and thus highly pointed arches, like those used elsewhere, could not be obtained for these spans. The Chancel roof is also ancient; it has well-moulded principals, intermediates, purlins, cornice enriched with pateræ, and wall pieces with figures; there are carved bosses at intersections, and carved spandrel pieces to trusses, &c. The ceiling is boarded, divided into panels by small mouldings; square flowers occur at all intersections, and stars in the centres of all panels.

The *north aisle of the chancel*, in which the organ is now

placed, was the *Jesus Chapel*: the monogram appears on the cornice of the roof internally, and on the buttresses externally. The walls of this chapel are faced with ashler. The chapel seems to have been erected by "The Guild or Fraternity of Jesus," consisting of President, Wardens, and Brethren. A list of benefactions to the Guild between 1516 and 1536 is given in Gorham's Supplement, page clxiv.

The *south aisle of the chancel* was St. Mary's Chapel. Robert Arnold in his will dated 1504 gave directions thus:—"I bequeth . . . my body to be beryed, if God will, in the Chapell of our Lodge annexed to the Chancell of the Parysh Church." The arch from the chancel is treated differently from that into the Jesus Chapel. There are cap, shaft and base on the south side; but the mouldings die into the jambs on the north side, next the chancel. There is a recess for a reredos in this chapel.

Old *oak screens* of much interest fill the arches at the east ends of the nave aisles, and the arches from the chancel into the aisles. That at the east end of the north aisle is especially excellent in its tracery and carving, and differs in design from the other three,—which have also their points of difference in detail, but are generally similar.

Recent Works.

The following notes as to recent works at the church have been supplied by residents at St. Neots:—

- 1843. Erection of North Porch of stone in place of a decayed brick porch.
- 1844. External repairs, chiefly to buttresses of aisles.
- 1846. General restoration begun. The grandfather of Mr. Emery, the churchwarden in 1887, was churchwarden in 1846; and Mr. W. Wade, uncle of the Mr. William Wade who attended the meeting of our Society, was the contractor for the works of reparation, including re-seating with carved oak benches,—local workpeople being employed by him. The floor of the church was lowered about eighteen inches. The plastering of the walls and the new flooring were the only works done in the chancel at this time. Mr. John Tacey Wing, of Bedford, acted as architect.

The pulpit was made by Messrs. Rattee and Kett, of Cambridge. The old oak stalls with "miserere" seats, now placed inside the altar rail to serve as sedilia,—seats of late Perpendicular date, simple character, and rude execution,—did not belong to this church, but were brought here from Milton Ernest, in 1848.

1855, 1856. The existing east window of the chancel was put in, being copied from the old one; and the present buttresses and ashler facing to the chancel were put, in place of the Early English buttresses and rubble walling previously existing.

About 1860. Choir seats made by Messrs. Rattee and Kett.

1880. Restoration of angle pinnacles of the Tower, under the direction of Mr. A. W. Blomfield, architect.

1881, 1883. Restoration of Sanctus Bellcote (and new cross over it); also of centre pinnacles of Tower; new crosses to two Porches. Mr. Thomas Garratt, A.R.I.B.A., architect. Enlargement of the Vestry.

1884 to the present time. Designs by Mr. Garratt for completing the stair-turret at the north-east angle of the nave, and for other works.

Materials.

For the early work Barnack, or a similar stone, was used. Barnack, not far from Stamford, is 30 miles from St. Neots in a straight line; but the stone is found still further afield in old work. It has been suggested that stone of a similar nature was quarried in different parts of Northamptonshire; such immense quarries would have been needed to supply sufficient stone for the very numerous buildings. At St. Neots, what is known as Barnack stone exists in the window on the north of the chancel, in a plinth of Early English date now under the floor of the vestry; and there are stones in different parts, especially in the lower part of the tower, which doubtless were in earlier buildings.

Clunch, like the Totternhoe stone used at St. Albans Abbey, was used inside this church, as also inside that at

Eynesbury; but not externally in either. A similar clunch is now obtained from Eversden, Cambridgeshire (15 miles off in a straight line). Stone from Weldon, Northamptonshire, is also largely used inside the church.

The stonework of the tower above the plinth bears a general resemblance to Weldon stone, is in good condition, and has weathered most pleasantly. The quarry from which this stone was obtained is not known, perhaps it was a small one, and worked out in supplying the stone for this tower. Quarries at Weldon are worked now, the present bed being the best for some time; the beds vary much in quality, some being excellent and others indifferent. It is a pleasant warm stone at first, and weathers to a beautiful grey.

Similar pebbles to those used in the rubble filling-in of the external faces of the nave and nave aisles are obtainable in the neighbourhood; pieces of Barnack stone, probably from the earlier buildings, were used in a random way among the pebbles.

Ketton stone (Ketton, Rutland, near Stamford) was used in the restoration of the canopies, finials and weatherings of the aisle buttresses in 1844, and in the restoration of the tower pinnacles in 1882 and 1884.

Bells.

Gorham states that the tower contains a fine peal of eight bells. The seven smaller were re-cast by Joseph Eyre, of St. Neots, in 1753, after a very strenuous opposition; the eighth, in 1764; the great bell being 14 feet in circumference and weighing 3,051 pounds. Dr. Rix adds that the great bell, being cracked, was re-cast at Downham in 1832.

Mr. Emery, the churchwarden, Mr. Thomas Garratt, Mr. William Wade, builder, of St. Neots, who has been connected with works of reparation at the church for 40 years, the Rev. H. Fowler, our Secretary, and other gentlemen, have given me information. To all who have assisted me, and to the Rev. R. C. Meade, D.D., the Vicar, for the fullest opportunities for studying the church, I tender my best thanks.

Notes on the Tower.

The tower is at the west end, reached from the nave through an arch of much dignity. Above the base-courses it is about 28 feet square, and the walls are 5 feet 6 inches thick. At the belfry stage the walls are 3 feet 6 inches thick. The height from ground to roof is 100 feet, and to the apex of the pinnacles 128 feet. Thus, being faced with light-grey stone, which weathers into various tones, it has two of the requisites for grandeur—namely, size and fine well-wrought material; and as the design is of a very high class, the other requisites are to be found too.

Calling to mind the districts in which the building of noteworthy church towers was largely carried on during the 15th and 16th centuries—especially the Eastern Counties and Somerset—and, noting points of difference and of resemblance, one might be tempted to suggest that a Somersetshire architect was employed at St. Neots. But Huntingdonshire perhaps also affords examples with resemblances in general idea and in detail. The suggestion of resemblances, by those who know the churches of the county well, would be welcome. As far as I know, or can gather, it is practically unique, being by far the finest work of the kind in the county. *

The points in every tower design are—1. Position on plan; 2. Stages and openings; 3. Angles and turrets; 4. Skyline.

1. *Position on plan.*—The tower is at the west end of the nave and disengaged—that is, connected with the church at the east wall of the tower only. The position was a favourite one with the architects of the Perpendicular period in all districts. Lavenham, Salle, Wymondham, St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, and Boston in the east of England; and in Somerset,—St. Cuthbert's, Wells, Huish Episcopi, Bishop's Lydeard, Bruton, Evercreech and the Taunton churches may be

Illustrations.

* Geometrical Elevation of the West Front of St. Neots Tower; by P. S. Lamborne: published 1764.

View of the tower from the south-west. Plate No. 4, Vol. 2 (Towers) in "Illustrations of Spires and Towers of the Mediæval Churches of England," by Charles Wickes, 1854-5.

The accompanying view of the tower from the north-east has been reproduced by Messrs. Sprague and Co., from a photograph by Mr. H. R. Sherborn, of Newmarket.

mentioned. The towers in all these churches occupy the same position on plan, and may serve to illustrate points of difference and of resemblance in design. The position is the most favourable—for the tower—of any position involving contact of tower and church. There is a satisfactory sense of resting on the solid earth; ample spread at base is possible and visible,—the eye ranging in a disengaged tower over two sides at a time from base to summit. Grantham and Newark lose much by being engaged to such considerable heights, and Louth would gain by being wholly free.

2. *Stages and openings.*—The tower at St. Neots has four stages. The lower stage has high base courses, and on the west face there is a large doorway, but nothing elsewhere. The second stage contains the very pleasing west window of four lights, and there is blank panelling of three divisions under pointed arches, to echo that window, on the north and south walls. The third stage begins at about mid-height from the ground to the top of the battlement, that is at about 10 feet above the present ringing floor, and there is a small two-light window on each of the four faces, for, of course, at this elevation the roof of the nave has been left below. These small windows have lights only 12 inches wide, as against the 18 inches of the belfry windows, thus acting as foils to these windows, which are of great size and occupy the top stage,—being a pair of two-light windows with a pier only 2 feet wide between them—or in other words—a four-light window with a large central mullion. The jambs are prolonged below the opening and panelled stonework is filled in above the high tabled sill. Cusped transoms, cusped heads, arches with crockets and finials, and labels brought down from the string course above, complete the windows; and a string, a space, a deep enriched band two quatrefoils in height, a space, and a battlement, complete each wall space. There is thus nothing so distinctive about the spaces, or the openings, as at once to cut off these parts of the tower from all, or to link it inseparably to some, examples. Huish Episcopi, with a larger belfry stage, and the omission of the rich three-light windows and niches in the stage below, would come nearest, and then not very near; or Bishop's Lydeard, with similar and other variations. The examples from the Eastern Counties have, however, still

less in common. Such a predominance of the belfry stage as we find at St. Neots was not contemplated by their designers. The predominance, which is noteworthy in comparing with Huish Episcopi, is much more so in comparing with Wymondham or Lavenham; and yet the rest of the tower at St. Neots is not subordinated, by its upper stage, in the way in which the upper stage at Wrington, or St. Cuthbert's, Wells, keeps the rest in awe.

3. *Angles and turret.*—Two large buttresses, with good projection, are put at each corner of the tower; each at a little distance from the angle, and at right angles to the wall face. They run up to the belfry stage and then stop. At the top of the string below the belfry stage, the wall face is made to recede from the wall face below by tablings, with the exception of about 5 feet at each corner. These corner pieces (called hereinafter angle or corner piers) are carried above the main battlement, having three stages of panelling on the two wall faces; then they have their own little battlements, angle pinnacles with crockets and finials, and central pyramidal spirelets also with crockets and finials, and vanes beyond all else. They get free above the main battlements, a little below the middle of their third stage, and show a bold variety of form against the sky.

The most distinctive feature of the treatment of the *buttresses* is the finish at their tops; by tablings upon which pinnacles, panelled on their faces and with crockets and finials, are set anglewise, the backs of the pinnacles being clear of the tower wall behind them. This is a method common in Somerset; found at the churches previously named, and at a number of others.* At St. Neots, however, the pinnacles are comparatively short; they do not mount above the tops of the belfry windows as at Taunton, Bruton, Bishop's Lydeard, and Huish. The perfect grace of outline at Bishop's Lydeard, where the change of form does not suggest itself to the mind, results from the admirable treatment of this feature. The eye is led from base to summit without being aware at any point that a stage has come to an end. Bishop's Lydeard is probably the most perfect example of the use of these pinnacles at the tops of the buttresses. The treatment of the skyline there,

* See note C on Page 44.

though very pleasing, cannot vie with the grandeur and variety of the crowning masses at St. Neots.

The stages of the buttresses at the angles of the tower at St. Neots are quite independent of the stages of the tower. The base courses run round the buttresses ; and, after that, there is not in all their height any string or other horizontal member of any kind binding them in with the tower, or even occupying the same level. The reason is pretty obvious. Each of the five stages of the buttresses is pannelled on the face ; two of the stages have the panel the whole width of the face, and three of them have a central upright. The whole are admirably proportioned in respect to one another, and the front of the buttress could probably not be improved in itself. Disregard of correspondence in levels is not peculiar to this tower, though it was rarely carried through with such completeness. At St. Cuthbert's, Wells, there are no strings continuing round the buttresses, nor at St. Peter Mancroft, and others ; the reasons for the omission not being difficult to find, but in those cases the stages in buttresses bear close relation to those in the towers. The singularly rich treatment of the faces of the buttresses at St. Neots calls more attention to the absence of the strings ; and there is consequently a look of buttresses placed against the tower, not exactly parts of it.

Three single and a double band of quatrefoils are carried along the faces of the tower—five in all, which is a liberal allowance, and the forms are all varied. Those on the base course are in circles ; those below the clock faces are in squares placed lozenge-wise ; those below the belfry stage have no enclosing circles ; and, in the broad band two quatrefoils in height at the top of the tower, the quatrefoils are all in squares placed horizontally. Those in the base course run round the buttresses as well as the tower ; but the two next run between the buttresses, and then re-appear at the angles of the tower. The upper bands are also not continuous ; they run up to the corner piers and stop there. Titchmarsh and Kettering, two notable Northants Towers of Perpendicular date, have also ornamental bands. At Titchmarsh there are eight bands, three of them it is true are in the base course, but seven of them are carried round both tower and buttresses, giving great unity. Kettering has five decorative bands, and is another

example of rigid adaptation of stages in buttresses to stages in tower.

There is a most beautiful relation between all the parts in the admirable tower at Kettering below the crowning cornice. The treatment of its buttresses differs from that at St. Neots in other respects—they grow narrower as they rise, those at St. Neots are of the same width from the base course to their upper tablings. At Kettering the buttresses lose themselves in the bold cornice which runs round the tower above the belfry stage ; as also at Oundle—those two towers should always be thought of together. In both of them crenellated turrets and parapets above the tower cornices, and crocketed octagonal spires, each with three rows of spire lights, make skylines differing widely from that at St. Neots.

The problem set at Titchmarsh was, however, much the same as that at St. Neots ; but it received there a different treatment. The buttresses at St. Neots were finished with the free pinnacles. At Titchmarsh sloping tablings finished the buttresses just above the string at the bottom of the belfry stage. The difference, in the way of connecting the upper stage with those below, is followed by a difference in the corner piers on the belfry stage. These are wider at Titchmarsh than at St. Neots, and they stop at Titchmarsh at the string which runs at the bottom of the parapet of the tower. The great pinnacles at Titchmarsh are only about half the width of the corner piers below. There is a satisfactory feeling in the crowning features being suggested from the first. In St. Cuthbert's, Wells, this is done thoroughly, the side of the pinnacle which cuts against the sky is carried down to the roof of the church.

[Contrasts with, and resemblances to, other towers were pointed out at the meeting on photographs and other illustrations. The subject of stair-turrets and their influence on the designs of towers was also dealt with. St. Neots is practically on the same footing at St. Cuthbert's, Wells, as far as the influence of the stair turret on the outline is concerned. The turret at Wells is at the north-west corner of the tower, and is finished by a stone pyramidal roof a little way up the belfry stage. At St. Neots the staircase is in the same position as at Wells ; but it is not visible—it is buried in the walls, the little

windows in the north wall of the tower are the only signs of it externally. The equalization of the four angles of a tower, or the supremacy of one of them, will have an important influence on the expression of a design. It is unnecessary to have strong prejudices which would exclude either finish, admirable results having been obtained with both].

4. *Skyline.*—The towers of the Eastern Counties frequently have bold buttresses and angles, and at times have good belfry stages; but they do not as a rule excel in their skylines. The fine late Decorated tower of Worstead—a tower 30 feet square, 2 feet more than St. Neots—has only small pinnacles at the angles, and the upper edge of the parapet has only slight depressions, not crenellations of the ordinary proportion. Hingham, of still larger size—33 feet square—has no pinnacles, only a block raised at each angle and a crenellated parapet; when seen at the proper angle and at considerable distances the bulk and strong shadows make it very notable, but it has no aid from its skyline. St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, and the magnificent west tower of Wymondham, (142 feet high,) might have been sawn off to level lines. The great tower at Wymondham also supplies an instance of the small development of the belfry windows in Norfolk churches. At Salle the buttresses end at the belfry stage; pilasters of slight projection are continued upwards, finishing in square pinnacles, a little wider than the buttresses below; a plain crenellated parapet runs between these pinnacles. It is the same idea as at St. Neots, but the effect is weak and meagre in comparison. The tower at the crossing and “the New Clocker” (the great detached tower) at East Dereham, also the large detached belfry tower at Beccles, are all finished with plain horizontal copings.

Lavenham, the finest church-tower in Suffolk, 42 feet square and 141 feet high, is finished almost as simply as Wymondham itself. The angles of the Lavenham tower have, however, bold corner piers, projecting more than those at St. Neots; and these corner piers might have been prolonged and finished with similar pinnacles.

It is thus not in the east of England, that such a treatment of skyline as at St. Neots is to be looked for; but the west possesses many churches with excellent skylines. The great angle pinnacles at St. Mary,

Taunton, and at Gloucester, start upon the bold cornices, and are not prepared for below the cornices; there is open work, and the spirelets are square on plan, their sides parallel to the sides of the tower. At St. Neots the angle of the tower is prolonged upwards, there is no piercing, and the spirelets are placed with their diagonals parallel to the wall-faces of the tower. These are all very noteworthy differences; but they seem mere differences in detail, in comparison with the contrast between the admirable relation to the tower of the great pinnacles at St. Neots, and the exaggerated size of those at Taunton.

Another feature found at St. Mary, Taunton, at Huish Episcopi, Kingsbury Episcopi, Glastonbury, and elsewhere, is also, as one may say necessarily, absent at St. Neots. Small pinnacles are projected from the angles of the parapets of these towers, being carried on corbels placed at the level of the cornices, and connected with the great angle pinnacles by flying buttresses. They were introduced in order to increase the bulk above the cornice, and thus to render more emphatic the "solemn frown of projection." Seen from a point not far removed, and opposite the side of the tower, the desired result is obtained; but seen on the angle and from some distance the projection seems overdone, and the tower top-heavy. At a distance the open intervals between the tower and the small pinnacles are not perceived, and the edges of the little angle pinnacles seem to be the solid angles of the tower.

The strong shadows from their bold crowning cornices, which led to and seemed to justify these projected angles, could not have been obtained without difficulty, at Taunton and Huish, if the pinnacles had been prolonged downwards. The strong shadows give such an air of distinction, that it is debated whether the continuous angles are not dearly purchased by the loss of the cornice shadows. The great Perpendicular towers with continuous angles have this sort of defect with their qualities. Being anxious not to cut their corner-piers into lengths, the designers carried no very bold strings across the corner piers, and no very bold cornices between them; for at St. Neots such a projection of cornice and parapet, beyond the general wall face below, would have taken away, at a critical point, the shadow

by which the corner piers are relieved from the tower. At St. Cuthbert's, Wells, the want of power in the cornice is felt even more decidedly than at St. Neots, owing to the greater boldness of the belfry stage at Wells.

[Further comparisons of the treatment of angle masses, parapets, and raised centres to them, were made and illustrations referred to; and it was then remarked that] St. Neots ranges itself, in reference to its skyline, less closely with Evercreech, than with St. Cuthbert's, Wells, and Wrington. It would be ungracious not to specially name, in dealing with this subject, the tower of Evercreech, in which a problem, nearly identical, was solved with a grace and charm almost unique. Wells and Wrington differ in detail from each other, and from St. Neots, but the character of the skyline, and the way in which the angle piers are introduced and maintained, are generally similar.

Note A referred to on Page 29.

The most important book dealing with St. Neots is called "The History and Antiquities of Eynesbury and St. Neot's, in Huntingdonshire; and of St. Neot's in the County of Cornwall: with some critical remarks respecting the two Saxon saints from whom these places derived their names."—By George Cornelius Gorham, M.A., Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge.

[The Reverend G. C. Gorham (18 years Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge), was Vicar of St. Just-in-Penwith, Cornwall, in November, 1847; received presentation of Vicarage of Brampford Speke, Devon, and was refused admission by Dr. Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter. (Thence the "Gorham Controversy"). The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council decided in 1850 in favour of Mr. Gorham. He died 19th June, 1857, aged 69. On a mural tablet in Brampford Speke Church, it is stated,—that he was "for seven years Vicar of this Parish, during which period (mainly by his untiring efforts) this church was rebuilt, etc." His connection with St. Neots, Hunts, was in part due to his father, George James Gorham, being a native of the town:—after living there for 74 years, he retired in 1826 to Eatonford, Eaton Socon, the adjoining parish on the other side of the Ouse, in Beds, and died there in 1840, aged 88. The Reverend G. C. Gorham—one of the six children who survived—erected a tablet in memory of father, mother, and the others, and placed it on the east wall of the Jesus Chapel.]

Perfect copies of the work have now become very rare. It consists of two 8vo. volumes. The first, published by Lackingtons in 1820, contains title, preface, corrections and contents, 8 leaves; history, p. 1-248; 9 copperplates. The second volume published in 1824 has its own title-page, but the pagination of Vol. I. is continued into the appendix, p. 249-340. The supplement then occupies p. 1-clxxiii.; corrections and additions being on p. clv.—clxxiii. Dr. Rix prepared and printed privately in 1867 some addenda, paged clxxiv. ^a—clxxiv. ^m

The index p. clxxv.-clxxxvii., was the last part of Vol. II. ; this had 2 plates. Some time after 1824, two lithographs and a sheet of letter-press were prepared to cancel certain leaves first issued ; the greater portion of these were however destroyed by the author. (See Dr. Rix's addenda for further information).

Eight of the Illustrations by Harraden were after larger drawings in Mr. Gorham's possession.

The work is of rare excellence, and the author was well entitled to remark (preface p. v.) :—" The information which the following pages present—sustained by perpetual references to the most ancient Documents, and confirmed by many original (and hitherto unpublished) Records, dispersed throughout the notes or inserted in the appendix—is the result of labour and expense with which the size of the Volume is by no means commensurate."

Note B referred to on Page 29.

Benefactions A.D. 1485 to 1535.

* The following extracts with reference to Benefactions for the New Fabric are from the " History and Antiquities of Eynesbury and St. Neots," by the Rev. G. C. Gorham. Supplement, p. clxi. :—

Wills in Registry Office of Archdeaconry of Huntingdon.

- A.D. 1485.—Robert Drope, who had been Lord Mayor of London in 1474, bequeaths " to the reparacion and werkys of the Church of Seint Neede * where I was borne—£3."
- „ 1487.—John Candeler—buried in the church—leaves 6s. 8d. to the fabric.
- „ 1489.—Wm. Crouker of S. Neots leaves " ad reparacionem sive fabricacionem port ecclesie parochialis de Sco. Neoto, 3s. 4d. . . . " also " to the reparacion and makynge of the Stepult ther, 5 merkes."
- „ 1492.—Andrew Pell, of St. Neot's—" To the werke of ye new Stepyll—20s.
- „ 1493.—Robert Grene of S. Neots—" Campanul [ariæ] dictæ ecclesie, 100s. et 5 vigas lapidis de Weldeyn."
- „ 1494.—Robert Corbett, of St. Neot's—" Fabricæ campanul 26s 8d."
- „ 1526.—Thomas Lynde, of S. Neot's—" I bequethe to the pinnaclys of the Steple, 20s."
- „ 1535.—Regnolde Myles, of St. Neot's—" To the bylding of the pynacles in the parishe Church, 6s. 8d."
- „ 1535.—Robert Drabon of S. Neot's—" To the reparacions of the pynnacles upon the Stepell newlie to be made at the parishe Church, 6s. 8d."
- „ 1535.—Robert Fletcher, of S. Neot's—" Towarde the makynge of the pynnakills, 6s. 8d."

* Phonetic spelling must be held responsible for this form ; not however confined to the 15th century. " A great victory, etc., at S. Need's " was published in London in 1648 " ; and

" The vulgar call it now St. Need's,—
Their market toun of fame."

Note C referred to on Page 37.

Pinnacles at the Belfry Stage.

It was pointed out at the meeting by Dr. Evans, whose active interest in all archæology will never abate, that a special refinement in connection with these small pinnacles is their want of verticality. They lean towards the tower, and thus do not set themselves in opposition to the gradual narrowing of the mass of the tower, obtained by the tablings of the buttresses and the set-offs in the walls. There are two set-offs; that at the lower band of enrichment is slight, but that at the level of the sills is much more considerable. Mr. William Wade, the builder, when engaged in replacing one of these pinnacles in 1884, began by setting it up plumb, and, then noticing that it did not look like the others, took it down again, and reset it, leaning towards the projecting piece at the corner of the tower (the corner pier) mentioned above.

When the whole of the facts are put on record in Mr. Thomas Garratt's measured drawings, the amount of artistic instinct and of solid thought, in the whole design and its details, will be made apparent to everybody. I hear with much satisfaction that this friend, so well known for many years as one of our most thorough students and refined delineators of architecture, is at work at St. Neots Church. His monograph is certain to prove one of which everyone connected with St. Neots, and everyone connected with Huntingdonshire, will be, with good reason, very proud.
