

RESTORATION OF YAXLEY PULPIT.

Of the many Post-Reformation pulpits which exist in Suffolk, probably the finest is that of Yaxley. At a recent lecture given by Mr. H. Munro Cautley, A.R.I.B.A., on "Our Suffolk Churches," he mentioned that the super-structure of this pulpit had been removed at the restoration of the Church in 1868, and formed part of cupboards in the Vestry, but that the whole of the parts were intact; and he expressed the hope that it might be possible one day to restore them to their proper place above the pulpit. Immediately after this lecture, Mr. Bunnell Burton came forward and most generously offered to defray the cost of doing so.

On visiting Yaxley for this purpose, Mr. Cautley found that there still existed an excellent photo of the interior of the Church, which we reproduce, taken prior to the restoration named above, showing the pulpit with the super-structure intact. Thus the evidences were complete as to its original form, and the work was placed in the experienced hands of Mr. E. E. Barnes, Waveney Road, Ipswich, whose expert and sympathetic knowledge has resulted in a perfect restoration.

The photo, unfortunately, cannot show the full interest of the back and sounding board, but the two panels behind the preacher are inscribed with that apt precept, "Necessity is laid upon me, yea woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." Two sets of initials are found upon it—T.F. and T.D.—probably those of the Churchwardens at the time of its erection. The first probably refers to a Fulcher, as this family has existed in the parish for centuries. And finally, on the central strapwork ornament surmounting the sounding board, is displayed the date of its erection—1635.

So much interest attached to the old photo of the interior mentioned above, that Mr. Cautley has presented a framed copy of it to hang in the Church. This photo shows what havoc was wrought by restorers of the Victorian era. Not only was the magnificent sounding board and back of the pulpit removed, but the legs were taken off, and two of these (grotesque female figures) are shown detached in the photo, though now they are lost. On the screen are shown several details of great interest, including what was probably traceried panels of the rood loft, now completely lost. In the photo, above the screen, the tympanum of the Chancel arch is shown filled in, with an inscription in black letters of the Commandments, and a blank space in which hung the Royal Arms; but nothing now remains, save the photo, to recall what was undoubtedly a compliance with Queen Elizabeth's wish, expressed in a letter dated January, 1561, that "tables of the Commandments should be set up in the Church, not only for edification, but also "to give some comely ornament and demonstration that the same was a place of religion and prayer." The Stuart pews shown in the photo have all gone, but the Vicar has discovered and



YAXLEY CHURCH INTERIOR PRIOR TO RESTORATION OF 1868.

rescued a complete panel of one of these, which is now exhibited in the Church. To crown all, an important tomb, shown standing in the South Aisle, has been bodily removed, and portions of it now form part of the cupboards in the Vestry.

Such were the "restorations" of Mr. Bunnell Burton's childhood, and it says much for the growing taste of the Age, and a growing feeling of responsibility and love for these irreplaceable and precious heritages of the Past, that in his later years he should come forward and add to all those other benefactions for which the Diocese is indebted to him, such a one as this; and gives us a lively hope that others will follow in his footsteps, for this great heritage is not to the Church only, but to the whole English speaking race.

Here at Yaxley, which is an amazingly interesting Church, there is still 15th century glass, never seen by the casual visitor, for until it is put back in the windows, it is hidden away in the surplice cupboards under the tower!!

(Contributed).

SYMBOLISM IN LONG MELFORD CHURCH.

I am inclined, for the following reason, to agree with Mr. Christopher Woodforde's view (Vol. XXI, page 66) that the so-called "Trinity Rabbits" in Long Melford Church were not intended, in all likelihood, to symbolize the Trinity. The "rabbits" or "conies" of Proverbs XXX, 24 and 30, were sometimes used by mediæval preachers to typify the students of the Trivium; like them, they were "little upon the earth, but exceedingly wise," and, though "a feeble folk," made their houses "in the rocks" of solid learning. Bernard of Chartres, too, seems to have had this comparison in his mind when he wrote of the students' keys of wisdom.

Mens humilis, studium quaerendi, vita quieta,
Scrutinium tacitum, paupertas, terra aliena,
Haec reserare solent multis obscura legendo—

lines quoted by John of Salisbury (Polycraticus, VIII, 13, ed. Webb) and expanded and explained by Hugo de St. Victor (Didascalion), III, 13-20). The meaning of the symbol would be that, while every student of the Trivium, as an individual, had two ears of his own, he and his fellow-students, taken in conjunction, had between them three ears, one for Grammar, one for Rhetoric and one for Dialectic, and through these the hearers were able to apprehend from their teachers the elements which the three subjects had in common. The symbolism, therefore, would be appropriate to the Trivium. It would not be appropriate to the Trinity, as, apart from the fact that it is neither distinctively Christian nor reverent in its conception, the emphasis laid on the ears as a connecting link would have no special significance. It is probable, therefore, that the mistaken name arose from the dedication of the Church to the Holy Trinity, and that the symbol relates to the Trivium. It may perhaps have been placed there by a man of academic distinction.