

THANKSGIVING SERVICE

JAN 13 1912 TO-DAY.

A service of thanksgiving, to commemorate the restoration of the tower of the parish church of St. Mildred's, Tenterden, took place to-day (Friday) afternoon, when the vicar of Tenterden (the Rev. J. A. Babington) was supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who preached the sermon, the Archdeacon of Maidstone, the Rural Dean, Canon Bell, or Cranbrook, and many of the rectors and vicars of the surrounding parishes. The church of St. Mildred's is a fine structure, and its tower is considered one of the best specimens of Perpendicular architecture in England. The famous tower is visited every year by very large numbers of enthusiasts of ecclesiastical architecture, and much history is attached to it. It was erected in the reign of King Henry VI. and has attained fame through being quoted in connection with the Goodwin Sands. A legend runs that the removal of stone from a sea wall on the coast of England, with which to build the tower, was the cause of the formation of the Goodwin Sands. It is certainly true that a beacon, in the form of an iron kettle, and placed on a high pole, was set ablaze on the top of the tower when the Spanish Armada was sighted.

The tower has naturally suffered from old age and during the past fifty or sixty years one or two slight attempts have been made at restoration, but until the present restoration was taken in hand practically nothing of any utility had been done to it. About thirty years ago iron supports were placed round one or two of the pinnacles, which to the eye were an abomination, and the rust from the iron played havoc with the stone. About five years ago it was apparent that something very serious was wrong, and a committee was formed to deal with the matter. Experts were called in, who reported that the tower was in an exceedingly bad condition generally, and the four beautiful pinnacles were in such a deplorable condition as to be absolutely dangerous. Steps were taken to raise money for the work, after it had been decided from expert advice to start at the top and work downwards, and in August, 1906, the first stage of the work was visible to the public, when a commencement was made with the erection of the huge scaffolding at the top of the tower. This in itself was by no means a small undertaking, when it is known that its height from the ground to the top of the vanes is 130 feet. The work then commenced, under the superintendence of the architect, Mr. Breakspear, the work being carried out by Messrs. Thompson and Co., of Peterborough.

The work was commenced on the two eastern pinnacles, which were considered to be in the most dangerous condition. These having been pulled down and re-erected, a halt was cried. It was now apparent that to complete the work would require two thousand pounds, a big sum for a small parish. Money slowly came in, and after a delay of some months work was again resumed on the two western pinnacles. Mr. Caroe, the great ecclesiastical architect, undertook the work, which was now carried out by Messrs. Cornish and Gayner, of North Walsham, Norwich, who have just put the finishing touches to the complete restoration of the pinnacles and upper portion of the tower. Up to the last day of the old year the fund had received £1,542 lls., which is practically all spent, and to complete the whole work roughly £500 is now required.

This week the final portions of the scaffolding have been removed, and a stranger passing the tower would hardly realise that the pinnacles had been rebuilt, so beautifully has the work been done. It ought not to be omitted that the bazaar which was held at Hales Place on two days in July last brought to the exchequer the most handsome sum of considerably over £400. The Archbishop's visit to the parish to-day will no doubt give a great flip to the work, and it is confidently anticipated that the amount necessary to finish the work will shortly be forthcoming. It has been a great undertaking. The Vicar has worked wonders for the accomplishment of what has been one of the biggest undertakings that has ever had to be carried out in Tenterden, and it will be a happy moment for him, when from the Vicarage, his eyes dwell on the grand old tower, he can know that the work is done, and well done, too.

After the service this afternoon the Vicar and Miss Babington were "at home" in the Town Hall to meet the Archbishop and Mrs. Davidson, when there was a very large number present.

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THE MONUMENT AND THE MESSAGE.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY AT TENTERDEN.

Historic Steeple Restored.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE.

The famous "Tenterden Steeple" is at last relieved of its unsightly scaffolding and its beauty can be admired as in the days gone by, thanks to the excellent manner in which the work of restoration has been carried out. The tower of St. Mildred's was erected in the third quarter of the 15th century and in a great measure by the parishioners, although it is certain the Monks of St. Augustine assisted. Having got their tower the parishioners went in for a splendid set of bells. Tenterden possesses one of the finest peals in either Kent, Essex or Sussex, the tenor bell being of the same weight as that in Canterbury Cathedral. The church also possesses the almost unique twin doorway which, however, is in a bad state of repair and the authorities are contemplating applying the Baryta system of hardening to both the doors and the windows. This is however, an expensive process, the cost for the west door and windows alone being estimated at £86. To return to the Tower: the work of restoring the land-mark, famous for over 400 years, was begun in September, 1908, and the original estimate of the cost was £700. This, however, was inadequate, for not only did the four pinnacles need rebuilding, but the facing of the tower required attention as also did the "broaches" and belfry windows. The result is that nearly £1,600 has already been spent and another £400 is required. That this will be forthcoming we are quite confident, for the great efforts of the Vicar and his friends, which have been the means of accomplishing so much, must be crowned with complete success. To those who have contributed to the fund and indeed to all concerned the greatest credit is due for preserving to Tenterden, for many years to come, such a splendid specimen of early English architecture.

The church was crowded on Friday afternoon, when the Archbishop of Canterbury preached the sermon at the thanksgiving service held to commemorate the restoration of the historic steeple, this being the first time for over eleven years that an Archbishop had visited St. Mildred's. The Vicar of Tenterden (the Rev. J. A. Babington) was supported by the Archdeacon of Maidstone (the Rev. Canon Spooner), Rev. Canon Bell, Cranbrook, Rev. E. K. B. Morgan, Biddenden, Rev. W. Raven, Smalhythe, Rev. John Jervis, Vicar of St. Michael's, Tenterden, Rev. D. H. Creaton, Vicar of Bethersden, Rev. B. W. Gilpin, Rector of Ilich Hadden, Rev. A. O. Scott, Vicar of Appledore, Rev. J. H. Burrows, Newenden, and the Archbishop's Chaplain, Rev. E. L. A. Hertslet.

The service opened with the processional hymn "The Church's one foundation." Then came a special psalm, "David professeth his joy for the Church and prayeth for the peace thereof," and the special lesson (St. John xi., 13-22) read by Canon Spooner. After the singing of the Nunc Dimittis by the choir, the recital of the Apostles' Creed and the hymn "Jesus, where'er the people meet," the Primate read the special dedicatory collects, concluding with the words: "O most glorious Lord God, we acknowledge that we are not worthy to offer unto Thee anything belonging unto us. Yet we beseech Thee of Thy great goodness to accept the dedication of the restored tower of this house to Thy service, and to prosper this our undertaking. Receive the prayers and intercessions of Thy servants, who either now or hereafter entering into this house shall call upon Thee and give thee grace to serve Thee with reverence and godly fear. Afflict us with an awful apprehension of Thy divine Majesty and a deep sense of our own unworthiness, that so approaching Thy Sanctuary with lowliness and devotion, with purity and sincerity of heart, we may be acceptable in Thy sight."

A BIBLICAL PARABLE.

The hymn "O worship the King" was impressively sung before the Archbishop gave his address, in the course of which he spoke "a few words of the simplest kind" about the meaning

of the gathering there. On such occasions, he said, his thoughts turned back to the scene in the temple courts, described by St. John in the 10th chapter of his gospel, when at the feast of dedication, and in winter, Jesus walked in the Temple in Solomon's Porch. His Grace spoke of the similarity of that service and the one in which they were now taking part, and reminded them that the prayers they had listened to a few moments earlier were drawn up by perhaps the greatest master of what might be called the science of prayer and praise which the English Church had ever known—Bishop Lancelot Andrews.

He mentioned the fact that that Bishop loved to take part in such work as had now been completed at Tenterden, and returning to a comparison of the scene described by St. John and the service then proceeding, the Archbishop outlined the history of the Temple at Jerusalem and referred to the veneration in which the sacred place was held by the Jews. He mentioned that it was to commemorate the restoration of the Temple after the return from the captivity that a day was set apart each year as a day of thanksgiving to recall what had been done for the glory of God and the good of the people at large.

Pointing out the lessons which were contained in the chapter to which he had referred, he said they must not take it lightly, as a mere incident or accident, that the scene there described took place upon that day of the thanksgiving. The presence of Christ was a lesson to the world and showed us the sacred importance of commemorating the goodness of God. He reminded them that the Jews gathered round and questioned Him, many of them desiring to learn who he was, many of them puzzled and perhaps with an element of scoffing behind their questions. "How long," they said, "Dost Thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ tell us plainly." And Christ standing in the presence of many who did not realise that He was the Son of God, did not answer their questions in the way they desired, but said "I told you and ye believed not; the works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But, ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep . . ."

THE SACRED MESSAGE.

Having dwelt upon the manner in which Christ impressed upon them the meaning of His presence, the Primate went on to say that it was in this part of the country that the people of England first heard the message which was brought to earth by the Saviour. Then he urged his hearers to ask themselves if this message which had been handed down from generation to generation was influencing their lives as it should do.

It was to remind them of the sacredness of the message that they dedicated that building, with its beauty and traditions, and took its most marked feature—which was famous in English History—the steeple, or tower, and made it once more what it used to be in dignity and security, a witness here in the midst of the County of Kent—a glorious monument—of the goodness of God. He then referred to the prominent position of the famous steeple and the part it played in English literature, and mentioned that Bishop Lattimer spoke of Tenterden steeple in one of his sermons.

After the address, the hymn "Now thank we all our God" was sung, and the Archbishop pronounced the Benediction.

Mr. A. H. Smith was the organist and the two Churchwardens in attendance were Mr. Edmund H. Hardecastle and Mr. J. S. Winsor.

THE VICAR "AT HOME."

After the service an "At Home" was held at the Town Hall by the Vicar and Miss Babington to meet the Archbishop. The hall was very prettily decorated by a number of the parishioners and after tea an excellent musical programme was carried out and much appreciated.

The following were noticed amongst those present, besides the clergy assisting at the service, Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Stillman, Mr. and Mrs. E. Howard, Miss Hardecastle, Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Dennis, Miss Baker, the Misses Johnson, Mr. J. S. Jordan, Mr. F. Stourbridge, Mr. W. Elliott, Miss Winsor, Mr. and Mrs. E. Apps, Mr. J. Backshall, Mr. and Mrs. G. Skelding, Mr. W. L. C. Turner, Mr. and Mrs. J. Whitfield, Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Ward and Miss Ward, Miss Jervis, Mr. J. Wurrall, Mr. and Mrs. G. S. Elgard, Miss R. Milne, the Misses Pritchard, Mr. and Mrs. Fallon, Mrs. Peel, Dr. and Mrs. Ticehurst, Mrs. Raven, Mr. and Mrs. T. G. Cole, Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Spillman, Mr. and Mrs. F. Allen, Mrs. E. Stanger, Dr. Skinner, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Mace, the Misses Parsons, Mr. J. S. Winsor and Mrs. and Miss Beale.