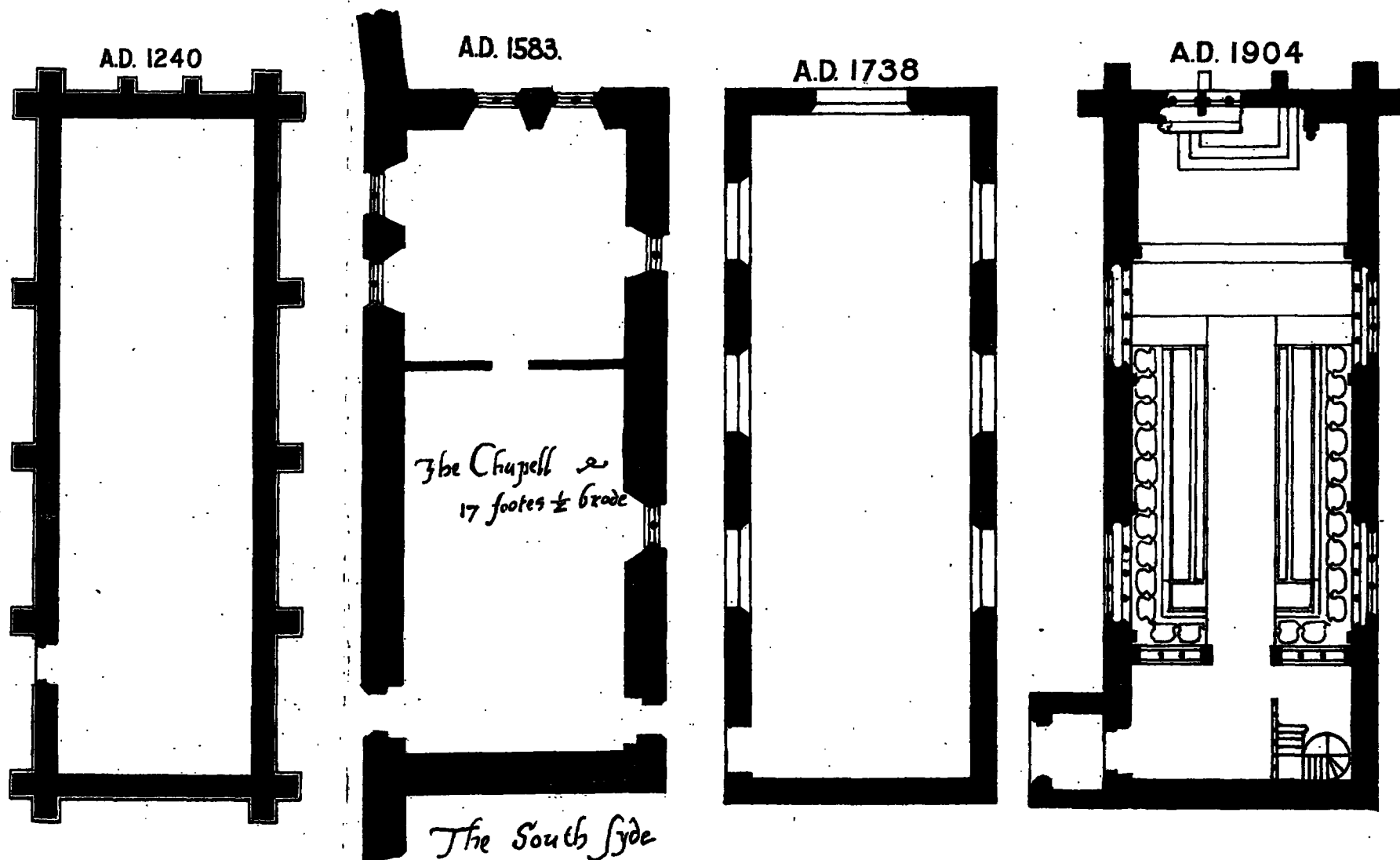




PLANS OF THE SUCCESSIVE CHAPELS OF ST. NICHOLAS IN CASTRO.

CHAPEL OF ST. NICHOLAS IN CASTRO, CARISBROOKE, I.W.

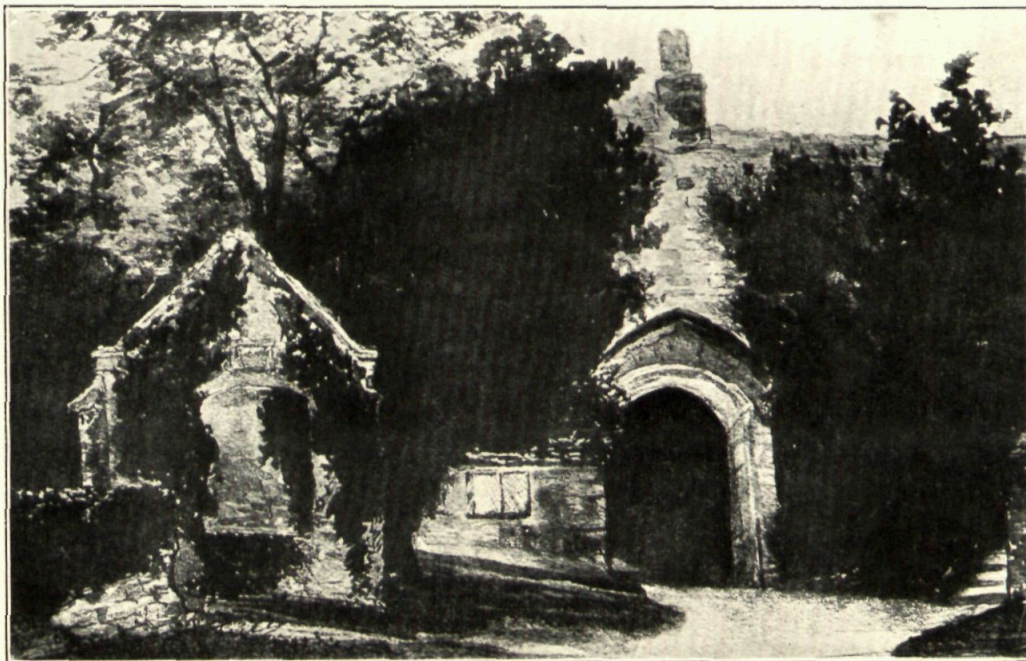
BY PERCY STONE, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.

A conclusive history of the chapel of St. Nicholas-within the-Castle of Carisbrooke is well nigh an impossible task, and by whom it was founded can only be conjectured. One thing is certain, however, that it was built prior to 1086-7, the generally accepted date of the Domesday Survey, and very possibly not on its present site, as I have never come across any Norman detail of any kind in my excavations to ascertain the level of the original floor. Like many other castle chapels, as at Bramber and Sarum, it was named after the Bishop Saint Nicholas. Three founders are possible—William Fitzosbern, his son Roger of Breteuil, and William the Conqueror. Of these three I am more inclined to the third—King William—as Earl William held it barely more than three years, being slain in the skirmish at Cassels, 1070, while his son, Earl Roger, was attainted five years later for his part in the northern rising. This would give a nearly ten years' tenure by the Crown before the compilation of the great survey; and a still stronger point in favour of a royal foundation may be found in the words of the survey itself, where it states that "St. Nicholas has—*habet*, not the usual *tenet*—of King William, one hide in Shalcombe"; i.e., a free gift from the royal founder as its first endowment, an independent holding owing neither suit nor service.

With the lordship it came to the great de Redvers family in the first year of Henry I., and Baldwin de Redvers in 1140 granted it to his newly founded Abbey of S. Mary at Quarr, whose monks hereafter regularly served it.

It is evident that the original endowment was materially augmented by gifts from four Island landowners in memory of the great Earl Baldwin, so that masses might be said for the repose of their lord's soul. This, at least, is how I read the confirmation of Earl Richard, circa A.D., 1156—" *Et concedo et confirmo...Capellam Sancti Nicholai Castello de Caresbroc edificatam quam pater meus dedit predicte ecclesie Sancte Marie Quarrarie...Quam Capellam cum omnibus quae eidem Capelle pertinent dederunt pro [anima] patris mei prefate Ecclesie Quarrarie Hugo Gernon et Guarinus de Halla et Brienus de Insula et Galfridus Jordan filius...quietam et solutam ab omni exactione.*" Unless the confirmation is wrongly transcribed by Worsley, I cannot see how else these four good men had any right of gift whatever ; what interest had they in the chapel unless they were substantial benefactors ? We may take it for granted, then, that the first Chapel of St. Nicholas was a simple early Norman structure (like the chapel at Castle Rising, Norfolk), and probably nearer the keep mound than the present building.

So it remained till the 13th century, when one cannot help thinking a rebuilding occurred, under the direction of the Convent of Quarr, and that before the advent of Isabel of Forz, as the "New" Chapel of the Castle accounts, 1270-1, clearly refers to the small private chapel attached to the Great Hall which I have suggested was dedicated to St. Peter. It is true remains have been found in the present building pointing clearly to a late period of pointed architecture and similar in many respects to the details of the private chapel, but these were probably removed in the reign of Elizabeth, when the chapel was dismantled. The excavations round the outside of the walls disclosed the existence of clearly-defined 13th century buttresses ; what worked stones came to light were of that period, and certainly the jambs of the original door, still *in situ*, were of that date. The references in the Castle Compotus rolls to repairs to the roof of the "old chapel" may refer to a former lords' or private chapel, as all repairs to the Chapel of St. Nicholas would be carried out by the Abbot of Quarr, as rector of the chapel, under grant from Earl Baldwin. Anyhow, whoever rebuilt the chapel in the 13th century, it was not the Countess Isabel, or we should



Townsend, Esq.

CHAPEL OF ST. NICHOLAS IN CASTRO, CARISBROOKE CASTLE, I.W.

SKETCH OF THE RUINED CHAPEL BY H.R.H. PRINCESS HENRY OF BATTENBERG.

find some mention of it among the castle accounts, which clearly state she built a new chapel, to be readily identified as the one adjoining the Great Hall, all the details of which belong to her time. That the Abbot of Quarr was responsible for the upkeep of St. Nicholas is clear from the mandate 5, Ed. III., when he was bidden to repair "his chapel in the Castle of Carisbrook," and from other documents to the same purpose. If the Countess Isabel did not actually rebuild the chapel, she, anyhow, greatly augmented its revenues by further endowing it with $13\frac{1}{2}$ places, or quarter-acre plots, in Newport, afterwards known as Castle Hold, and from time to time other endowments followed—issues from land at Rowborough, Luccombe, Cosham, Shorwell, Roud Rew, and Middleton, in Bembridge. From the castle accounts of 1292 it is evident that the vicar was residential, with a separate dwelling house within the castle, and that under him he had a chaplain at a yearly stipend of 13s. 4d. Prosperous times those for the Chapel of St. Nicholas under the care of the Abbey of Quarr, but with the dissolution the long connection was severed, though the last Abbot, Wm. Ripon, ended his days as vicar at a stipend of £6 13s. 4d., and a pension of 2s. 4d. from the tithes of Shalcombe. Henceforth it may be described as a garrison chapel in the gift of the Crown.

By the end of the 16th century, neglect and decay had probably played havoc with the 13th century building. It was now for the first time to be rebuilt under new conditions. In the survey of the castle by Richard Popinjay, the Queen's Surveyor, in 1583, a scheme for this reconstruction is evidently shewn. The plan accompanying the report represents a plain rectangular building, shorter than the original one, with an entire absence of buttresses, and lighted by two-light windows of a late period. The East End is cut off by a screen, a very unlikely feature in the original. This plan may or may not have been carried out exactly as shewn, but the general decayed state of the buildings is specially referred to in the report, and I think we may take it that a rebuilding of the chapel did take place. The walls were apparently removed down to the lower plinth of the buttresses—thus practically obliterating these features—and the floor filled up to the outside level with debris taken from the

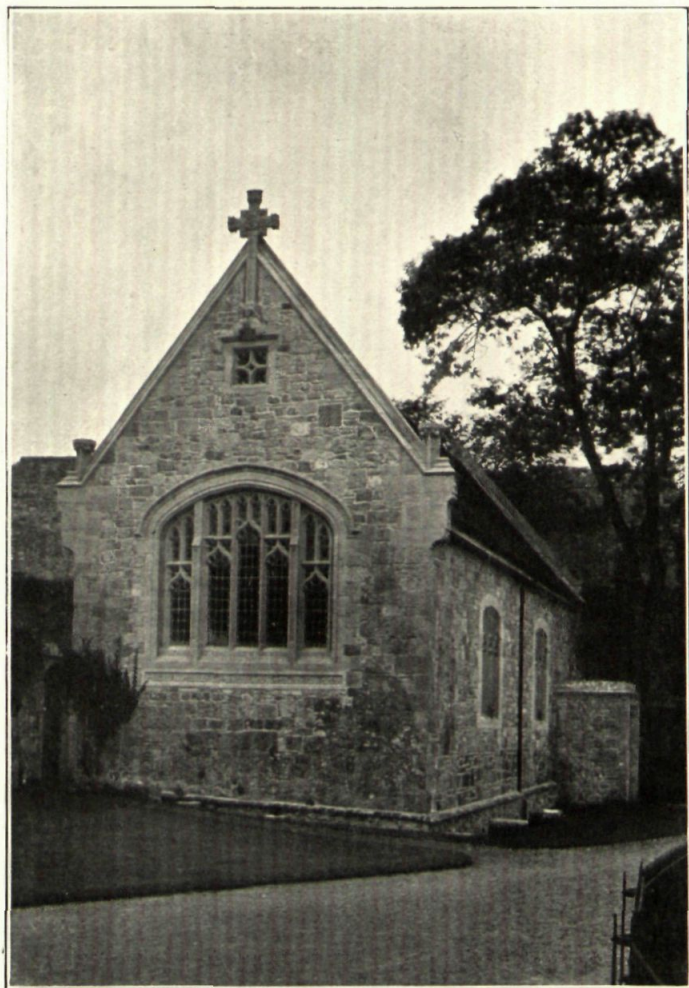
private chapel—at the same time converted into domestic apartments. On excavating to ascertain the level of the original floor many such worked stones were found, corresponding in exact detail with the remains of the chapel adjoining the Great Hall, which strengthens this conjecture. On the 13th century base the new walls were raised, and a late Tudor building was the result. It was at this period that an interesting secular custom was connected with the chapel, though the exact date of its origin cannot be clearly ascertained. I refer to the swearing in of the Bailiffs of Newport before the Captain of the Wight, within the walls of St. Nicholas. This custom is enjoined at length on the Mayor in the charter of Charles II.—

“That after he should be so elected and nominated
 “mayor of the said Borough and before he should be
 “admitted to exercise that office he should take his
 “corporal oath upon the Holy Evangelists on the day
 “of his Election in form aforesaid made, or upon any
 “other day, except Sunday, after his election and
 “before the said feast of St. Michael the Archangel,
 “then next following, before the Captain of the Isle of
 “Wight aforesaid or his Steward for the time being in
 “the Chapel of Carisbrooke Castle. . . .”

Till the beginning of the 19th century this interesting custom was duly observed, and from an entry in the Newport Corporation books it must have been a noteworthy ceremony very desirable of revival:—

Sept. 23rd 17co.

“This day the Corporation now assembled went from
 “the Toune Hall to the East End of the Towne, the
 “Constables carrying their pole-axes and the Serjeants-
 “at-mace, the Toune maces before them. And from
 “thence the Mayor, Mayor-Elect, wth. the Corporation
 “and the new elected Constables, went to Carisbrooke
 “Castle, where in the Chapple after divine service the
 “Mayor and Constables elect were duly sworne into
 “their respective offices, taking the oaths and making
 “the subn. [submission] by law, required in presce. of
 “the Lt. Gov. Col. Josh. Dudley and the Governor's
 “Steward, Mr. John Bowler.”



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THE RESTORED CHAPEL OF ST. NICHOLAS IN CASTRO,
CARISBROOKE CASTLE, I.W.

(EAST END.)

As a garrison chapel, St. Nicholas was used during the troublous times of the Stuart dynasty, but at the beginning of the 18th century it seems to have again lapsed into a bad state, though that it was used in 1723 is evident from the entry of a marriage solemnised within its walls in the December of that year. That it was in a decayed condition is apparent from the fact that in 1734 Lord Lymington, being appointed Governor, resolved to rebuild it and accomplished his intention four years later, dating his effort in the usual way with stone tablets inscribed respectively G. R. and Lord Lymington, 1738.

The old walls were taken down to within three feet of the ground level and re-raised in brick faced with stone. Three windows lighted the new structure each side with a larger one at the East End, and access to the chapel was obtained through a doorway of Georgian design. Finally at the close of the century the roof was crowned with a wooden cupola in which was hung a Dutch bell brought from Hoorn. The effort was not a happy one. Except the door there was no detail worth recording. The windows were filled with wooden tracery, though this may have been added later in the time of Walpole's Strawberry Hill Gothic, the walls simply plastered, and dull uniformity reigned supreme. All Gothic traces have now disappeared, and we get practically a new Georgian Chapel in 1738, a chapel where religious services must have been held, and yet fifty years later we find Governor Orde-Powlett determining "to revive the performance of divine worship, and to rescue the chapel from those unhallowed purposes to which it had been too long applied." What unhallowed purposes the Governor refers to one can only conjecture, the historian is silent. The only view I know of this Georgian Chapel is the obviously very inaccurate illustration in "Beauties of England and Wales, 1800," where deer browse in the foreground and a general "Gothic" feeling is given to the whole, more in accordance with the artist's fancy than the actual facts.

In the summer of 1806, the two sons of the then Governor of the Island, Rt. Hon. Thos. Orde-Powlett—created Lord Bolton, 1797—died of small-pox and were buried at the East

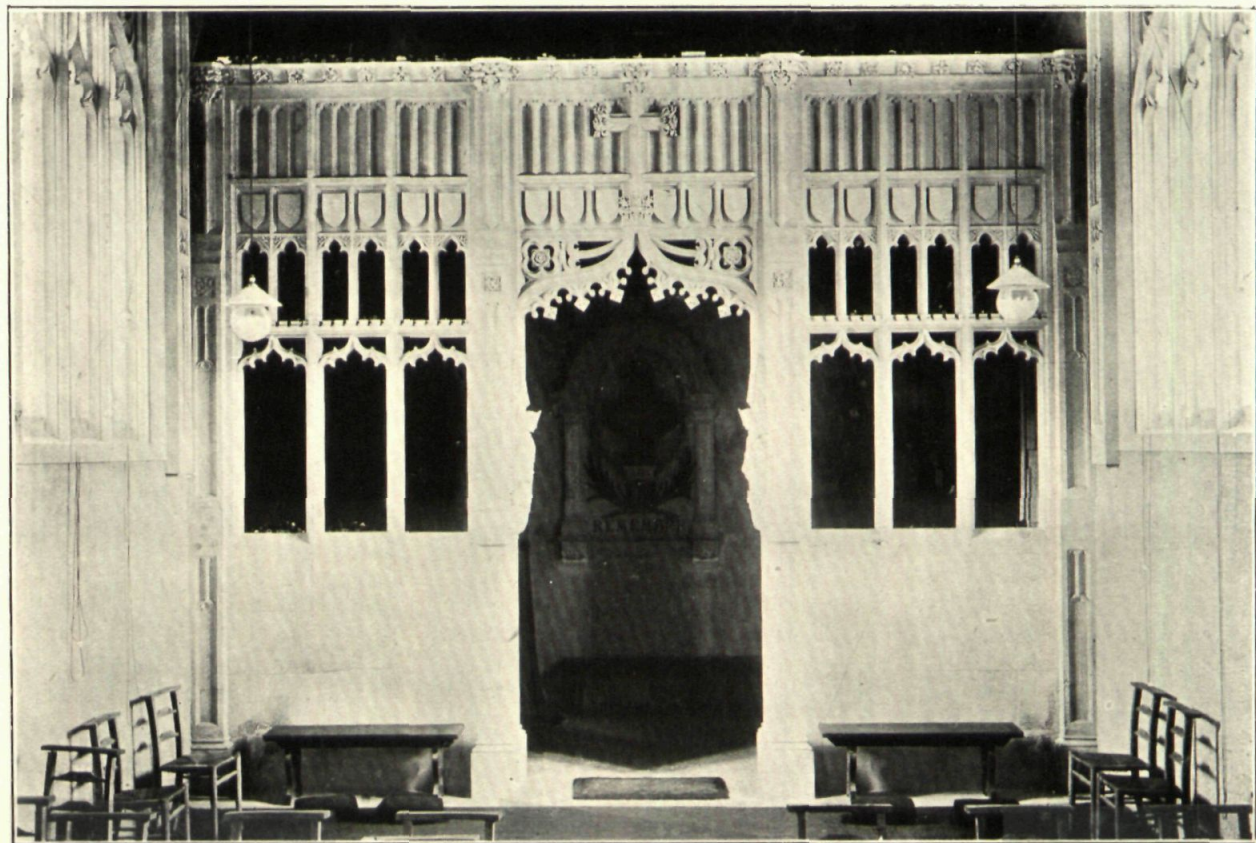
End of the Chapel, where a brass plate now marks their resting place before the altar.

To the honour and Glory of God,
and sacred to the Memory of
THE HON. MANNERS POWLETT ORDE-POWLETT,
died an Infant,
and
THE HON. CHARLES POWLETT ORDE-POWLETT,
Died 27th August, 1806, aged 13,
Sons of THOMAS, 1st LORD BOLTON, Governor of
the Isle of Wight.

Lord Lymington's creation lasted but for a century. In 1856 it was deemed expedient to remove the roof and convert it into a pseudo ruin ; and thus ended ingloriously the history of the ancient Chapel of St. Nicholas in Castro, a building deserving of a better fate. Founded by a king, supported by a powerful abbey, witness of a royal prisoner's captivity, the scene of solemn civic ceremony ; that such should be allowed to crumble to decay was little short of a crime, and yet for fifty years, dismantled and roofless, it vainly raised a mute appeal for restoration.

After half a century of wilful ruin this appeal was at length answered. The glamour of Charles the Martyr had ever hung over the Castle. From far and near people came to gaze on the scene of his long imprisonment, and in the last year of the nineteenth century this general devotion took shape in the formation of a Provisional Committee on the 250th anniversary of the King's death, when a plan of procedure was determined on. The sanction of the Government having been obtained it was decided to restore the roofless chapel of St. Nicholas to its original purpose, as a memorial of the imprisonment of the martyred King within the Castle walls.

A representative Committee was formed under the chairmanship of the present Bishop of Worcester [Dr. Yeatman-Gibbs] and orders given for a design to be prepared with a Tudor Gothic *motif*. The structural part of this design



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STONE SCREEN. CHAPEL OF ST. NICHOLAS IN CASTRO, CARISBROOKE CASTLE, I.W.

has now been carried out, and the decorative treatment alone remains to complete the work and make it worthy of its object. The first thing to be done in the reconstruction was to examine the walls. These were found to be poor in construction and much out of the upright, owing no doubt a good deal to the strong growth of ivy, and it was determined to remove the walling down to the original level, *i.e.*, about three feet from the ground, and on this original basement to raise the new work. The stone used has been Doulling for the window dressings, local free stone and lime stone for the walling, and for the internal finishings Bath stone from the Monk's Park quarries. Two windows have been inserted in the north and south walls, and a high buttressed window now lights the east end. The entrance doorway has been finished, as originally, with a pointed arch—the jamb stones being *in situ*—and others found among the débris have been replaced in their original position. A late Tudor porch has been built as a protection to this door, and a new bell cote formed at the West End of the chapel roof in which now hangs once more the old Dutch bell from the Haverkamp's foundry at the Hoorn, 1781. The exterior calls for little comment, as it has been kept studiously plain so as not to interfere with the repose of the rest of the Castle buildings, and the only attempt at decoration has been at the East End, where a floriated cross supported by an angel figure surmounts the gable, and pedestals for future figures of St. Nicholas and St. George form the base stones of the coping, which further bear the royal cypher C-R and Crown with Tudor Rose. One can only now describe the building as the visitor would enter it through this yet unfinished porch.

Immediately to the right is the memorial tablet to King Charles in polished and carved Hopton Wood Stone, relieved by bronze enrichment, with a pedestal bearing Bernini's well known bust of the King, under which is the Martyr's Crown, and the historic last word "Remember." To the left is the stone screen through which entrance is gained to the body of the Chapel. This, pierced below and panelled above, supports an organ gallery containing the organ from the Chapel Royal Savoy, a gift from H.M. the King. Passing through the opening in the screen with its side angel supports one observes the general scheme of the interior. Right and

left are the double windows with their spandrelled inner screen, their flanking pannelled buttresses with the terminal angels grasping the shields to be eventually blazoned with the arms of the principal worthies of the Wight—De Redvers and Forz, Montagu and Carey, Lymington and Battenberg. Above and round the Chapel, binding it as it were together, runs the Christ legend, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

A peculiarity will be noticed in these north and south windows. Three outer lights are faced with a screen of four bays, thus giving variety as well as a feeling of depth, and when the stained glass is fixed and the flanking statues placed on the side pedestals waiting to receive them, the result should be rich and effective. Indeed, to attempt to criticise the present work without its polychromatic finish is impossible. It is like the empty setting of a jewel, cold and hollow, awaiting the gem that is to give it life and colour. The East end next claims attention, where an attempt has been made to arrive at some definite effect. The whole of the Sacarium up to the roof plate is panelled in stone above a plain ashlar plinth, and in the lower panels are the brackets ready for the ultimate effigies. The East wall is practically taken up with a reredos purposely modelled with a monumental *motif*. The tracery here is rich and the carving consistently varied, no two cusps terminations being similar. The terminal angels grasp the shields bearing the mystic *alpha* and *omega*; and the *ter sanctus*, with enriched foliage and cherub heads, forms a connecting band across the top. Up the jambs of the East window the bosses are carved with grape vine broadly treated owing to the coarse nature of the Doulting stone. Over the head three angels hold a ribbon with the legend, *Gloria sit tibi Domine in Sempiterna Sacula*.

The inlaid Altar Cross from the late Queen Victoria's private Chapel at Osborne is worthy of notice, as also the renaissance silver candlesticks, both Royal gifts.

The scheme of ultimate decoration includes polychromatic treatment of the roof, the panels bearing the King's cypher.



Townsend, Exeter.

REREDOS.
CHAPEL OF ST. NICHOLAS IN CASTRO,
CARISBROOKE CASTLE, I.W.

and Royalist legends alternately. The walls between the windows will be marble lined, with bands of bronze bearing the shields of Charles's principal adherents. The stalls and seating will be in oak taken from the hulk of H.M.S. Nettle, and the windows will be filled with subjects in painted glass. The floor of the Sacarium will be of marble inlay, and the body of the Chapel will be floored with black and white mosaic.

Lastly, it is hoped to render possible a consistent scheme of iconography, the Sacarium niches being filled with martyred Kings and Queens, and the body of the Chapel with those of canonised Saints of the Early English Church, Archbishops, Bishops and Doctors, thus completing a monument not altogether unworthy of its object, a memorial of the Royal prisoner who spent so many weary months within sight of its grey walls, which must have constituted one of the last sad memories before his shameful death that bleak January morning without his own Palace of Whitehall.

THE
ROYAL
CYPHER



OF
KING
CHARLES I.

SCHEME OF ICONOGRAPHY, CHAPEL OF S. NICHOLAS

GABLE.

St. George.

St. Nicholas.

EAST END OF CHAPEL.

Edward the Martyr.

Edward Confessor.

S. Helena.

S. Hilda.

S. Edmund

S. Ebba

S. Ethelred

S. Ethelbreda

S. Wistan

S. Ethelberga

S. Kenelm

S. Sexburga

S. Ethelbert

S. Werburga

S. Oswyn

S. Ermenhilda

S. Oswald

S. Mildritha

S. Edwin

S. Editha

S. Augustine

S. Anselm

S. Dunstan

S. Thos. of Canterbury §

S. Birinus

S. Benet, Biscop

S. Wilfred

S. Bede, Ven.

SCREEN.

? King Charles the Martyr.

Archbishop Laud ?