

## CONSECRATION OF A NEW CHURCH AT MIRFIELD.

A new and handsome church built at Mirfield, at a cost of about £25,000, was yesterday consecrated by the Bishop of Ripon. Many years ago the sum of £3,000 was left by Mr. Joseph Lee for a peal of bells, and as the old parish church was not equal to modern requirements, this bequest led the late vicar, the Rev. R. Maude, to urge the desirability of a new parish church being erected; and it is largely owing to the exertions that he made, and the great liberality of the residents in the district, that the scheme was matured and the interesting ceremony of yesterday took place. Amongst the principal contributors to the building fund were the family of Mr. J. C. Ingham, £6,000; Mr. Joshua H. Wheatley, £2,000; and Mr. Charles Wheatley, £2,000. About £4,000 is still required to make the church free from debt. Mr. George Gilbert Scott, of London, was the designer of the new building. It is situate on the west side and close up to the site of the old parish church, and is a choice specimen of Early English architecture. The plan consists simply of nave and aisles, chancel, south porch, tower, and two vestries at the north-east corner, one of which is appropriated to the choir. There is a tower at the west end of the nave, which adds considerably to the length of the church internally, and rises 140 feet from the ground line to the verge of the pinnacles. The tower contains a clock and ten bells, the latter cast by Mr. Taylor, tenor bell weighing 30 cwt. 1 qr. 22 lb. The clock was supplied by Messrs. Potts and Sons, of Leeds, and it strikes the quarters on true bells. There are three dials, which are ingeniously encased in the stonework, and are visible from a great distance, the hands and figures being gilt. The principal entrance is through a low-gabled south porch, but there is also an entrance at the west end, through the town. This doorway is composed of a deeply recessed and richly moulded arch, supported by stone-moulded leaves, detached shafts, and moulded capitals, the tympanum being filled in with diaper and carvings, also a circle sculptural, representing the Annunciation of St. Mary. The nave is 82 feet long, divided into five bays, and is 27 feet across; the tower is 21 feet square, the aisles 13 feet 6 inches wide, and the chancel 40 feet by 27 feet between the walls. The entire length is 50 feet 6 inches, and the width between the walls 60 feet 4 inches; the height from the nave floor to the ridge is 64 feet. The church is lighted by coupled windows, with splayed jambs along the north and south sides, and by three lancet windows in the tower. The west one of these windows is to be filled in with stained glass, by Clayton and Bell, of London, presented by Mrs. Ingham, of Blake Hall. The east window is a triple lancet, with circular window over, and two coupled side windows to the sanctuary. The clerestory is arcaded both inside and out, and has a small lancet window pierced through the middle of each bay. The tower is vaulted under the ringing chamber floor, the stone arches springing from stone corbel shafts at the angles; the cells are filled in with local stone in their corners. The seats are of oak. The chancel, stalls, and screens are very rich in detail, there is a richly moulded chancel arcade, and fossil marble columns give a very rich appearance to the whole. The reredos is very handsome, being profusely enriched with carvings, diaper panels, marble figures, and the caps, bases, and panels being in Derbyshire spar, the divisional clustered shafts being in Cornish spar. The arcading on either side is in Caen stone, with Mansfield triple shafts. There are four sculptured figures in the reredos—St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John the Baptist, and St. Matthew. The centre group represents the Crucifixion. The whole is terminated by a rich cornice and bratticing. The altar table is oak, and richly moulded, covered with a York stone slab. The kneeling step at the altar rail and the seats of the sedilia are covered with beautiful needlework, which has been worked to design by several young ladies of the congregation. The pulpit is oak, and very rich in design; in the panels are figures, carved in oak, representing St. John, St. Paul, and St. Augustine of Canterbury. The clustered divisional shafts are in walnut. It stands upon a corner stone base, with green marble shafts supporting. This pulpit has been presented by the parishioners as a testimonial to the late respected vicar, the Rev. R. Maude. The font is composed of a beautiful specimen of green marble; on the four sides of the bowl are granite foils, with statuary sculptured figures inserted, representing the four rivers of Paradise. The church will be lighted for evening service with ten coronas, richly gilt, and a large one in the chancel, with 100 burners. The organ is being built by Mr. Jardine, of Manchester, and is expected to be complete about the middle of next week. The contractors were Messrs. W. and J. Milnes, Mirfield; Messrs. Barker and Clough have done the carpenter and joiner work; the carving has been done throughout by Messrs. Farmer and Brindley, London; the reredos is by Mr. Earp, London; the pulpit and font by Mr. B. Phillip, London; the coronas by Messrs. Potter and Sons, London; the chancel stalls by Messrs. Rotter and Kitt, Cambridge; the nave and aisle seats by Mr. Thompson, Peterborough; and the warming by Mr. J. Brooke, Huddersfield. The clerk of the works has been Mr. H. Roome.

The consecration service excited much interest, and the new church was crowded. A procession, composed of the choristers, the churchwardens and sidesmen, the Vicar of Mirfield, the Archdeacon of Craven, the clergy from the parishes of Mirfield, Batley, Birstal, Bradford, Dewsbury, Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds, Thornhill, Wakefield, and other districts, accompanied the Bishop of Ripon from the old church to the new building (where there was divine service), and afterwards to the consecration of the land acquired for the purpose of a burial-ground. Subsequently luncheon was served in the Mirfield Town Hall, where the chairman, Mr. J. C. Ingham, was supported by the Bishop of Ripon, Archdeacon Musgrave, the Rev. Canon Woodford (Leeds), the Rev. Canon Heald (Birstal), Rev. Canon Burfield (Bradford), Rev. Canon Camidge (Wakefield), Rev. D. Coleridge (Prebendary of St. Paul's), Rev. Thos. Nevin (vicar of Mirfield), Mr. Chas. Wheatley, Mr. J. H. Wheatley, Mr. E. Day, Mr. R. Wheatley, Mr. E. Howgate, Mr. G. H. Hebblethwaite, Mr. George Gilbert Scott (London), Mr. T. Greenwood Teale (Registrar of the Diocese), and others.

The BISHOP OF RIPON, responding to the toast of "The Bishop of the Diocese," congratulated the residents of Mirfield on the completion of the new building, which, he said, was the eighty-eighth church he had had the privilege of consecrating during the last fifteen years within this diocese. (Hear, hear.) Often as these occasions came round, each brought a new interest and aroused in his heart feelings of the deepest thankfulness to God for such cheering tokens of His favour. He regarded every new church that was erected as a fresh indication of the zeal and affection that was felt towards their good old Church of England; and he thought they might look upon the erection of such structures as a good omen and as a token that they were not about to lose the favour of God, but that the efforts of those who would fain pull down the Church, so far from succeeding, would rather, like those tempests that swept against the forest tree, serve to root it more firmly in the land. (Applause.) Another reason why he rejoiced in the erection of such buildings was that it was found by experience that the rearing of a new church, the replacing of an old church by one that was more magnificent in its appearance, more beautiful in its architecture, more worthy of the purpose for which it was set apart, was not unfrequently the cause of the promotion of a fresh spirit of true religion, and of a more earnest purpose to promote the glory of God by living according to His will. The material church structure might be regarded as a sort of barometer by which might be tested the spiritual condition of mankind. If a church was allowed to become dilapidated, no other proof was needed that vital religion in the parish was at a low ebb; but where the church was a noble building like that in which they had been worshipping, one could not but feel that it was the result of a spirit of zeal for the glory of God, and was an indication of a higher state of spiritual feeling throughout the parish to which it belonged. (Applause.)

Mr. CHARLES WHEATLEY and Mr. J. H. WHEATLEY replied to "The Subscribers and the Committee," proposed by Archdeacon MUSGRAVE.

Mr. G. GILBERT SCOTT, replying to the toast of "The Architect," remarked that Yorkshire was full of the most magnificent specimens of the thirteenth century architecture, which he had selected as his model in carrying out the new church. Who had not seen the great transept at York, with its "Five Sisters" window; the charming minster at Beverley; the glorious abbeys of Fountains and Rievaulx; and the ruin on the weather-beaten rock at Whitby? In building a church that was suited to modern life and modern liberality, they must not forget that they were supplanting the remnant of a church that really belonged to the thirteenth century; and he trusted that they would strengthen its old tower and allow it to stand side by side with what was, after all, only an imitation of the thirteenth century architecture. (Applause.)

Several other toasts were also proposed and responded to.