

RESTORATION OF WORMINGHALL CHURCH.

BY THE REV. JAMES STATTER, VICAR.

As may be seen from the foregoing account, the Parish Church of the Manor having, in lapse of time, and from centuries of neglect and religious indifference, fallen into a sad condition of ruin and dilapidation, at a meeting of the ratepayers, convened by the Vicar, and held in the church, August 6, 1846, R. Groom, Esq., being present as the representative of the late Viscount Clifden, Lord of the Manor, it was unanimously resolved that the said church needed a thorough reparation, and that as Lord Clifden had offered a considerable sum towards defraying the expense of the undertaking, the work of restoration should be commenced with as little delay as possible.

Plans of the required repairs were presented at this

¹ See Bishop Tanner's "Notitia Monastica."

and subsequent meetings by Joseph Clarke, Esq., architect, of London, and a contractor having been engaged to carry them out, the work was forthwith entered on.

Externally, the walls were repaired; the whole north wall and a considerable portion of the south wall were taken down and rebuilt; a new vestry was added on the north side of the chancel, and the old wooden porch on the south side of the nave replaced by a neat stone building. Internally, the plaster ceilings of the nave and chancel were removed—a new roof of stained deal placed over the former, and the roof of the latter well restored.

The tower at the west end, besides undergoing a thorough repair inside and out, has been supplied with a peal of three bells and a Sanctus bell, partly made by recasting three former ones which were either cracked or broken. The unsightly gallery at the west end of the nave has been taken down, and the three-light west window brought into view. The high-backed deal pews are now replaced by open oak benches, after the pattern of some old ones which were still remaining. The chancel is raised above the nave by two steps, and a rood-beam supporting a wooden cross placed under the chancel arch. In the chancel itself oak stalls on either side occupy the place of two large pews. The altar space is considerably elevated, and the floor paved with encaustic tiles of a plain pattern; the former communion-table being replaced by an altar of oak, with a super-altar against the east wall. The east window of three lights is filled with painted glass—a figure of our Lord occupying the centre, and two kneeling figures of SS. Peter and Paul filling the side lights. A memorial medallion-window of good design has, since the restoration, been placed in the window on the south side of the chancel nearest the altar. A Piscina, found on the south, and Aumbry on the north, have been opened up, and a plain oak credence table stands at the south end of the altar.

Besides these extensive repairs and additions since the first restoration, an elegant corona now hangs from the chancel roof, and brackets for lights are placed on either side of the walls of the nave. A good lectern is placed below the chancel steps, and a substantial carved pulpit is erected against the chancel arch on the north, entered by an opening from the vestry. The prayer-desk



CHURCH OF S.S. PETER AND PAUL WORMENHALL.

PLATE III

has also been removed from its former position in the nave, and now occupies the south corner of the chancel.

The whole cost of the restoration, which, owing to unforeseen circumstances, far exceeded the first estimate, amounted to £1200. To this the late Viscount Clifden, lay impropriator of the cure, contributed £500, advancing also £200 on loan, without interest. The rest of the expense was raised by public subscription, and a voluntary church-rate of 6d. per £1, extending over several years. The whole remaining debt has now been paid off, and a neat, plain, but not inelegant structure, affords an example of what all small country parish churches should be.
