

Kippen Church.

THE ecclesiastical history of Kippen from the tenth century bears record of three Chapels and three Parish Churches. According to the 'Pictish Chronicle' the Church of Dunblane was burned by the Britons of Strathclyde during the reign of Kenneth M'Alpine. For many years afterwards the Church was vacant, and most of its possessions were seized by seculars and misappropriated to their own uses. In 1238 the Bishop of Dunblane repaired in person to Rome to represent to the Pope the utter decay of the Bishopric, and to make complaint that Earl Walter of Menteith, or some of his predecessors, had seized the Church of Kippen with right to the living. The result was that in that same year Kippen was erected by an ecclesiastical convention, acting under the authority of the Pope, into a perpetual canonry of Dunblane. The Earl of Menteith, however, preferred handing over the Church lands to the monks of Cambuskenneth, and a long and bitter dispute ensued between the Bishop of Dunblane and the Abbot of Cambuskenneth until an amicable arrangement was come to by consent of King James IV., and engrossed in a Charter on 30th March 1510. An interesting entry in the accounts of the Lord High Treasury records the fact that James IV. attended the Kirk of Kippen in 1489, and gave 'ane angell' as a thank-offering for his success in surprising and routing near Aberfoyle the Earl of Lennox, Keeper of the Castle of Dumbarton, who had raised an insurrection against the Government.

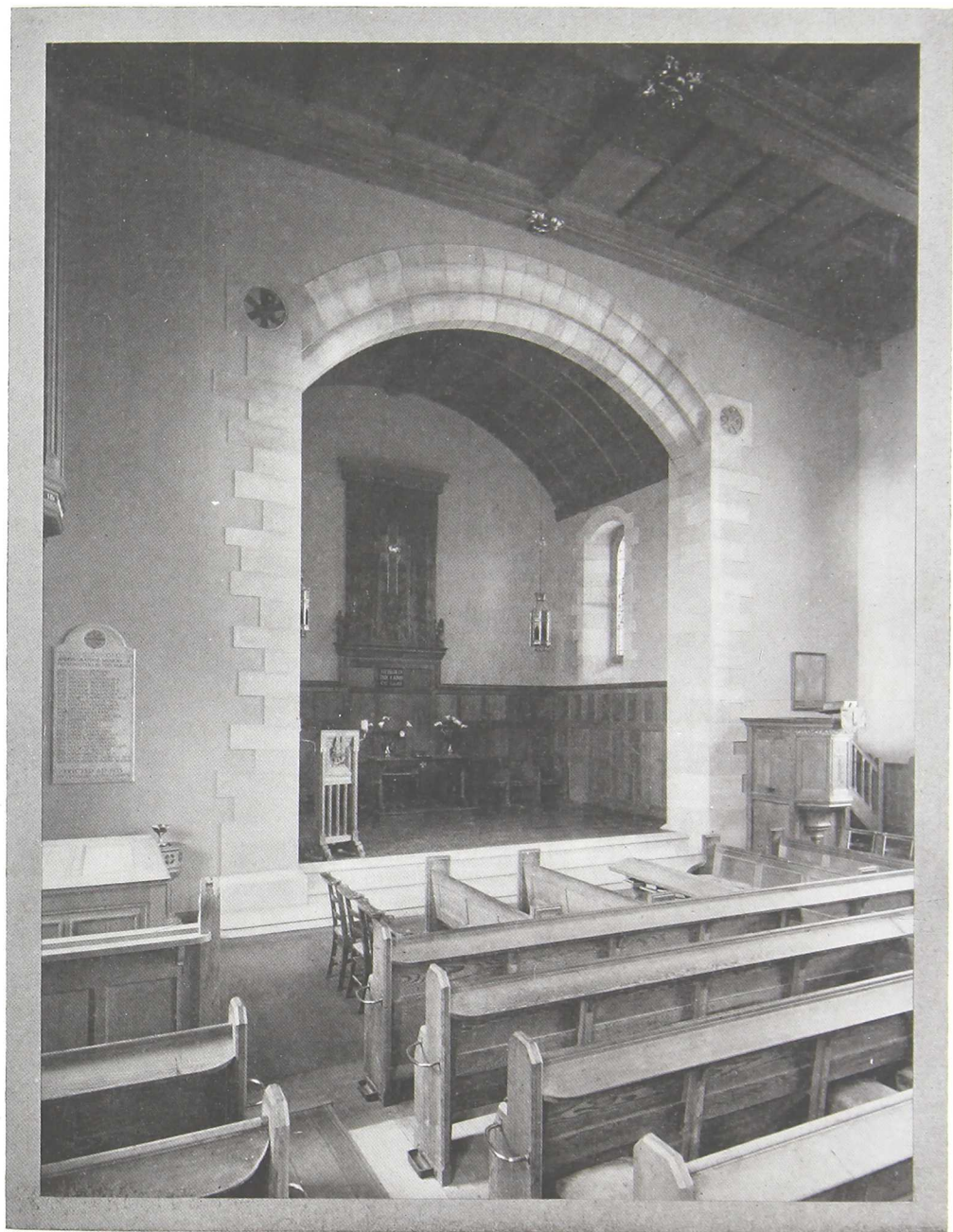
In 1606 the Kirk lands were alienated and assigned by James VI. to Johne, Earl of Mar, Lord Erskyne, who so interpreted his obligations to the parish that a Committee was appointed by the Diocesan Synod of Dunblane, under Bishop Leighton, in 1665, to perambulate the bounds of the parish and examine the Church. It reported "That the Kirk is ruinous, both walls and roof, and called for present reparacione." They suggested a new Kirk further to the west, and the second Parish Church was built in 1691, enlarged and repaired in 1777, and ultimately stripped and everything moveable sold 'by

public roup' in 1825. The belfry and bell fortunately were spared this sacrilege, and these alone remain gaunt witnesses to the vandalism and irreverence of a past generation. That same year saw the present Church completed at a cost of under £1500. The design is typical of the period, but the workmanship was good. If there was no decency in the treatment of the old Church, there was little vision in the planning and furnishing of the new one. A large horse-shoe gallery obscuring the upper half of the windows made the interior utterly gloomy, which necessitated the use of lamps during morning service in winter. Memories are short, and already it is hard to realise that a building unlit, unheated, and neither wind nor water-tight was considered in the nineteenth century worthy to be called the House of God. Presumably some sense of the fitness of things accounts for the fact that so few of them were consecrated to His Glory.

A new chapter in the annals of 'The Kingdom of Kippen' dates from 1925, the Centenary of the present Church, with a preface covering the first quarter of this century as the period of enlightenment and preparation. In January 1924 the congregation met in Church and unanimously decided to do something to mark the Centenary, something that would make the sanctuary more worshipful and facilitate God's ministry of beauty.

It was a great venture of faith for a rural congregation to sanction and inaugurate the scheme then outlined, and estimated to cost £5000. On the first Sunday of September the offerings placed by individual members of the congregation on the Communion Table amounted to £3251, 16s. 11d. This was considered ample evidence of the enthusiasm of the congregation, which has been confirmed by the fact that by 1928 over £10,000 were contributed in money or gifts. None have been asked to contribute, but with the ideal or idea of making the Church expressive of our sense of fellowship with the Most High, all have seen the Shadow of God and the Shadow of the Cross of Sacrifice upon it—luminous, arresting, searching our hearts.

Plans were prepared by Mr Reginald Fairlie, A.R.S.A., Edinburgh, in consultation with Sir D. Y. Cameron, R.A., LL.D., to whose faith and vision the scheme owes its inception, and whose knowledge and resources freely and fully consecrated to the service of the Church have made possible the progress effected.



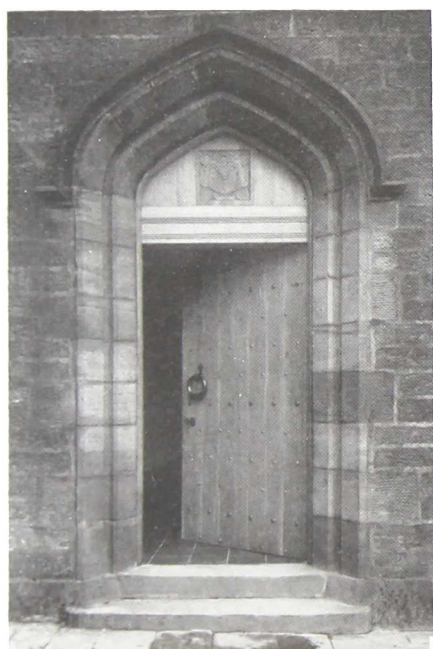
Crowe & Rodgers.

The new Chancel.

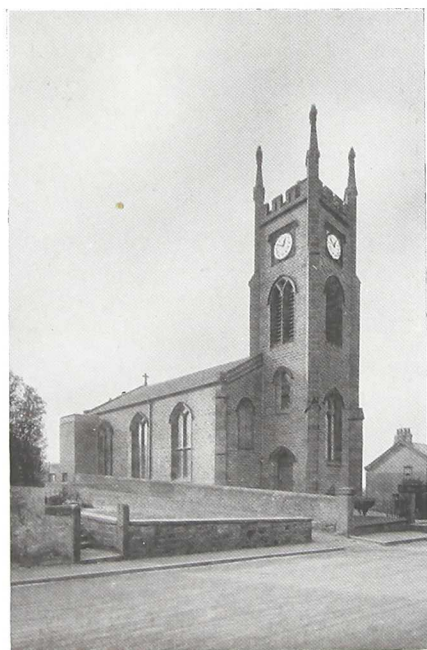
The Parish Church, Kippen.



View looking North-West.



The Door.

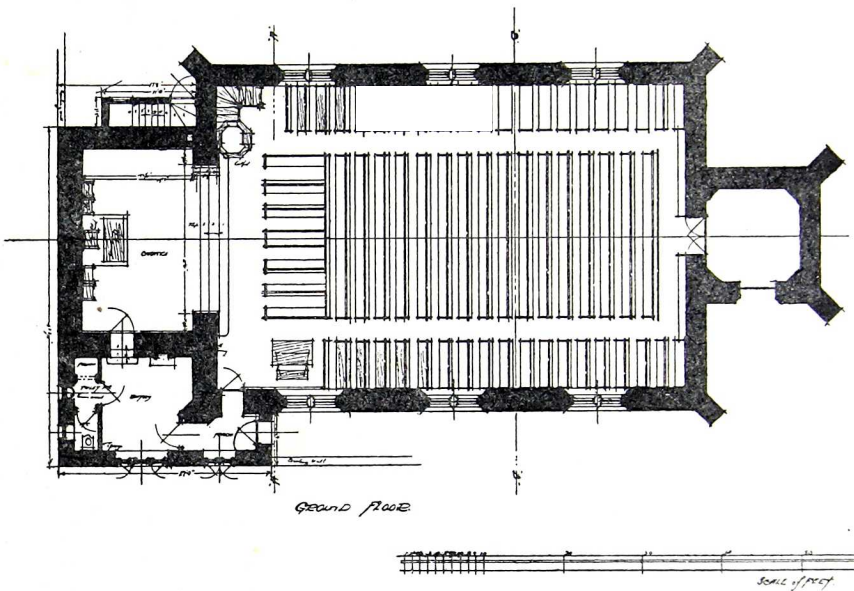


Exterior.

The Parish Church, Kippen.

Photographs by T. & R. Annan.

The galleries were removed and the stained glass windows rebuilt, a new gallery being erected across the north-west end of the Church to provide the necessary seating accommodation. The original entrance to the gallery from the stone stair in the tower was retained. The south-east gable was broken through, and the apse built with the arch and windows of Auchinheath stone. The walls of the apse are 2 feet 6 inches thick of dressed stone, with a 9-inch inner wall of brick and an intervening space of 2 inches. The roof is of oak, barrel-vaulted; and the panelling, stalls, floor, and lectern also of oak. The



original oak Communion Table and Chair, which are of chaste design, have been retained. Two 'Sanctuary Lamps of Remembrance' of wrought iron gilt faintly illumine a silk rose-damask panel which bears a cross of gold, with the Lamb finely embroidered in the centre on a blue background. The Memorial Windows in the apse, as also that in the gallery, are by Mr Herbert Hendrie of the Edinburgh School of Art. Other furnishings include the pulpit, the gift of the Woman's Guild in memory of former members; choir stalls; illuminations on vellum and mahogany. The panel of Hoptonwood stone near the chancel commemorates the ministers of the parish from 1574 to 1920.

The next step was the removal of the plaster ceiling

and the building of the organ-chamber, which is in the form of a square tower of hewn stone at the south-east corner. Both the new ceiling and the Memorial Organ were dedicated as individual gifts. The ceiling is slightly vaulted, the original cross beams being of necessity retained and strengthened by the addition of others alongside. It is constructed of oak, panelled, with bosses carved in the form of crosses of varied design and gilt, the end beam above the gallery bearing an angel holding the open Book.

The organ is a two-manual pipe organ by Messrs Norman & Beard, the casework being of oak of natural colour harmonising with the oak of the roof and apse. The central feature of the case is a shrine containing a reverently apprehended oak figure of a winged angel—'Innocence'—bearing a lily and companioned by doves—all symbolic of the spirit of the little child to whose memory this gift was dedicated. The design and carving are the work of Mr James A. Woodford, a young sculptor who in 1922 won a scholarship at the British School at Rome.

At the main entrance is a massive oak door, studded, with a sanctuary knocker of gun-metal surmounted by a cross, executed by the Artificers' Guild to a design supplied. The vestibule has been paved with 12-inch red tiles, and the stair enriched with an old panel of wrought-iron work and hanging lamp. On the wall is a 'Call to Prayer' written in script by Mr Edward Johnston of the Kensington School of Art. An electric plant has been installed to provide power for the organ and lighting for the Church. Meanwhile temporary shades are in use until appropriate fittings can be designed. The paint has been removed from all old woodwork—including the font, which is the work and gift of the minister in 1872.

A Session-house will be built this year suitable to accommodate the choir and the Primary Department of Sunday School, and available for meetings of the Guild. A bare catalogue of the changes carried out gives but a meagre idea of the transformation effected by harmony of design, proportion, and colour.

The Church now lives and speaks not in a dead language but in terms of our experience of God. Those responsible have thought and worked on the principle that the Scots Kirk has a tradition of beauty worthy to be maintained, and where it has been impossible or inadvisable to follow rigidly its forms have reverently sought to interpret its

spirit. They decided that no gifts should be accepted unless they had control of the designs and choice of the craftsmen. Nothing of a merely decorative character has been incorporated in the scheme. Carving, lettering, and symbol have been utilised to express their sense of the holy. Congregational interest has been accentuated by the fact that local tradesmen have carried out the work. Even in a country village the hand of the artist-craftsman has not lost its cunning if opportunity be provided as of old for the exercise of his gifts. Much might be done in town and village if only the Church of Scotland would become again the Patron of the Arts and Crafts, and appoint a Fine Arts Commission to guide and advise. The renovation of the Church has meant much to the spiritual life of our own people, and awakened widespread interest. The offerings for Church Schemes and charitable objects outwith the parish have all been increased in spite of, or perhaps because of, the sacrifices involved in putting the mark of our generation on the House of our God. It is our "*Te Deum*," and it has been our privilege to enter the more deeply into the mystery of Worship, as the Church has come the more richly to reflect the spirit of beauty at the heart of the 'Scots Renaissance of Life and Worship.'

Gloria in Excelsis Deo.

J. M. YOUNIE.
