

restoration. The groining of the central tower is low, thus intercepting the view of the church from west to east; it stands at the intersection of the transepts with the main body. The spire, having twice been injured by lightning and wind, has not been rebuilt.

On Candlemas Eve, February 1st, 1444-5, the steeple of this church was fired by lightning in a storm which, considering the season of the year, was remarkably extensive, for at the same time the churches of Baldock, in Hertfordshire, Walden and Waltham, in Essex, and that of St. Paul's, in London, were also damaged.*

The peal of bells, ten in number, is very fine and sweet of tone. Near the vestry is a small piscina, and on the south side of the south chancel is another of a more imposing character beneath a Gothic canopy. There is also a third immediately adjoining the entrance to the tower staircase, where was originally a chapel.

The only part of the structure which exhibits a specimen of the antiquity of the whole is the south aisle of the chancel, which is built of chalk, irregularly intermixed with flints. Although probably no part of the present building is older than the fourteenth century, there is reason to suppose that a church was founded in this town during the very earliest existence of Christianity among the Saxons. There is mention in the "Domesday Book" of a church at Kingston.

The church can boast of many fine monuments, including a statue of the Countess of Liverpool, by Chantrey—very beautiful, although not very ecclesiastical. The ruthless Vandalism of the Cromwellites defaced or swept away some of the most ancient and interesting tombs and tablets, and almost all the brasses, of which, judging from the marks on the floor, there must have been many. Of those still remaining, that of Robert Skern and Joan, his wife, now placed beneath the wall near the north entrance, having been removed from the communion rails, by which it was partly covered, is well worthy careful inspection, on account of its execution and representation of the costume.

Some careful sexton would seem to have placed considerable value on this monument, for it has escaped alike the ravages of time and fanaticism which have destroyed other monuments. Robert Skern lived at Down Hall, on the banks of the Thames. His wife was a daughter of Edward III. and Alice Perrers. Against the south wall, under an arch, is the altar-tomb of Sir Anthony Benn,

formerly Recorder of Kingston, and at the time of his decease Recorder of London, who died on the 29th September, 1618. He is represented by a recumbent figure of alabaster, in his official gown, with a large ruff, and his head reposing on an embroidered cushion. In the nave of the church is an inscription to the memory of Thomas Cranmer, M.D., who died in August, 1748, John Cranmer, who died in 1723, and others of that family. Here, too, lie buried Thomas Agar, once mayor, and twelve times bailiff of Kingston, who died in 1703, aged 94; John Haywarde, ensign to Captain North, brother to the Lord North who died in Sir Walter Raleigh's last voyage, and Thomas Hayward, who died in 1655. The last-named is honoured by the following epitaph:—

"THOMAS HAWARD.

"Ashes on Ashes lie, on Ashes tread,
Ashes engrav'd these words, which Ashes read,
Then what poor thing is Man, when every gust
Can blow his Ashes to their kindred Dust?
More was intended, but a wind did rise,
And fill'd with Ashes both my mouth and eyes."

Dr. Bate, physician in succession to Charles I., Oliver Cromwell, his son Richard, and Charles II., also lies in Kingston Church, together with his wife, Elizabeth, whose death was accelerated by the Great Fire of London. The doctor appears to have had a happy facility for—not to put too fine a point upon it—adapting himself to circumstances.

Dr. Edmund Staunton, who was Vicar of Kingston, had ten children interred in the south chancel, with the following epitaph inscribed on a slab of brass:—

Here lie ye Bodies of

Frances	Richard	} Children which ye Lord gave to EDMUND STAUNTON, Dr. of D., late Minister of Kingsto-vpon-Thames, now Presit. of Corpus Christi Colledge, Oxon; by Mary, his Wife, Daught. of Rich. Baldhorp, Servant to ye late Queene Elizab.
Richard	Edmvd	
Mary	Edmvd	
Mathew	Sarah	
Mary	Richard	

Ten Children in one grave! A dreadful sight.

- a Job 1. 2. Seven Sons and Daughters three, Job's number a right
- b Eccl. 11. 10. Childhood & Youth are vaine, Death reigns ouer all:
- c Rom. 5. 14. Even those who never sin'd like Adams c fall:
- d Rom. 5. 12. But why ouer all. In the first d Man every one Sin'd and fell, not He himselfe alone
- e 1 Cor. 15. 22. } Oar hope's e in Christ. The second Adam:
1 Tim. 1. 21. } He
- f Mat. 1. 21. } Who saves / the Elect from sin and Misery.
- g Rom. 5. 9. 10. } What's that to Vs poore Children? This our Creed,
- h Gen. 17. 7. God is g a God to th' faithfull and their seed.

* Mr. G. Roots says that on the occasion of this same storm a person died in the church through fear of a spirit which he saw there.