

church dedicated to "S. Martha and all Holy Martyrs." It is placed on one of those beautiful hills to which the greensand formation lends such picturesque outlines. It probably was once the site of a Roman encampment, for near it Roman remains have been found, and it certainly lies on the "Pilgrim's way" connecting Southampton, the old landing place of many foreign pilgrims, with the ancient city which contains the shrine of S. Thomas of Canterbury. The little church, quaintly built of red-sand iron-stone, is not very remarkable in itself, but there is below it a room left of the house of the priest who served it, and the view from the church right away to the South Downs over Worthing, and back to Windsor and London, is splendid.

If, however, the visitor will look due south, a heath, called Blackheath, or in the ancient spelling Blatchetfeld, will be seen at a distance of about two miles. On this heath is a hamlet, and it contains a little Mission Church, of which much more will be heard, as it is, in many respects, remarkable for the frescoes it contains, with all but life-size figures, executed by a woman, and in a "medium" used for the first time in this country.

The church was designed by Mr. C. Harrison Townsend, who thus describes it in a paper communicated by him to the Institute of British Architects in February last. He says that throughout the whole design of the little building, he bore in mind the intention of decorating its interior in polychrome. The exterior was therefore kept perfectly simple, and effect was gained by proportion and by the colour-value of the material, rough yellow stucco, red tiles, and specially made thin Roman-like bricks. There is a bell-cot for three bells, and simple as the exterior is, it suggests one of the little hill-side Italian-Tuscan churches to be seen in North Italy. The west front is particularly interesting with its rich moulding of yellow stone, and its fine arch of the same red tile-like bricks. It is, moreover, ultimately to have a beautiful "Annunciation" in coloured *Scraffito*, which means "scratched plaster," the design being cut in bold lines in plaster, the intentions being to place the Virgin over one side of the west door with the figure of S. Gabriel kneeling before her; but this has yet to come. Entering the little building, we find that it is unusually low, but nevertheless seems strangely spacious for its size, with a waggon-shaped or barrel ceiling. About half-way towards the highest point of this barrel ceiling, a moulding runs the length of the church, and while it is proposed that the upper portion of the ceiling shall be enriched in plaster surface ornament and richly gilt, the surface below the moulding to the springing line is left free for the work of the fresco painter. Upon the slightly curved surface which is thus provided, Mrs. Lea Merritt has executed some very remarkable works. She has wisely discarded the time-honoured gothic figures, placed in what are known as "stained glass attitudes," that is, with their hands up and their necks apparently dislocated, and has adopted pure, Italian pictorial treatment; but not the least interesting point about the work is that it is in permanent fresco, and might be washed with impunity. Now fresco work is of many kinds. The colour may be incorporated with the material, and worked in, as it were, bit by bit, so that the design is built up. The colour may be carried in with wax into a more or less porous base, as is, we

believe, the case with the beautiful semi-circular frescoes by Sir F. Leighton at the ends of the galleries at the South Kensington Museum; but Mrs. Lea Merritt has adopted a different method. An ordinary rough plaster wall is the starting point, a thin coat of sand marble dust; infusorial earth and lime is laid on, and over it a thin coat of the same materials in the proportions of eight parts of the first four constituents to one of lime. The ground is prepared by covering it with a solution of a dilute acid, and then with two coats of dilute silicate of potassium. The pigments, consisting of metallic oxides, are painted on with a brush in the ordinary way, and the whole is then fixed with a solution of silicate of potassium.

The effect is very beautiful, and the colours are permanent. The little building, as a whole, is very interesting, because it has demonstrated that Art may really be the handmaid of Religion, and for a cost but slightly exceeding that which is often spent on an unsightly iron building, a really artistic work may be secured. It is, moreover, a praiseworthy attempt to introduce into this country the simple, effective treatment of early Italian architecture, the nearest approach to which has hitherto been the Norman form of Gothic, if Gothic it can be called, which still survives in many of our old churches.

Inventions, Preparations, &c.

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