NOTES ON THE OLD CHURCHES IN ADARE

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THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS

The writer one day about a year ago noticed that a large stone had been dislodged by ivy from the top of the nave wall on the north side about 14 feet from the west end of the old parish church and in falling had brought some of the ivy with it, exposing the sandstone head of a built-up window, of similar type to the east window of the chancel. When more ivy was removed I found that a breach in the wall had been repaired and that the left hand side of the window had disappeared, but most of the dressed sandstones of the right hand jamb with the cill stone were intact and set in mortar. The stones of the repair were without mortar. A monumental slab is erected on the inside of the wall, which obscures any trace of the window from the inside. The only original sandstone of the left hand jamb is the one supporting the left hand end of the single stone forming the round head of the window. The sketch shews all this, A.

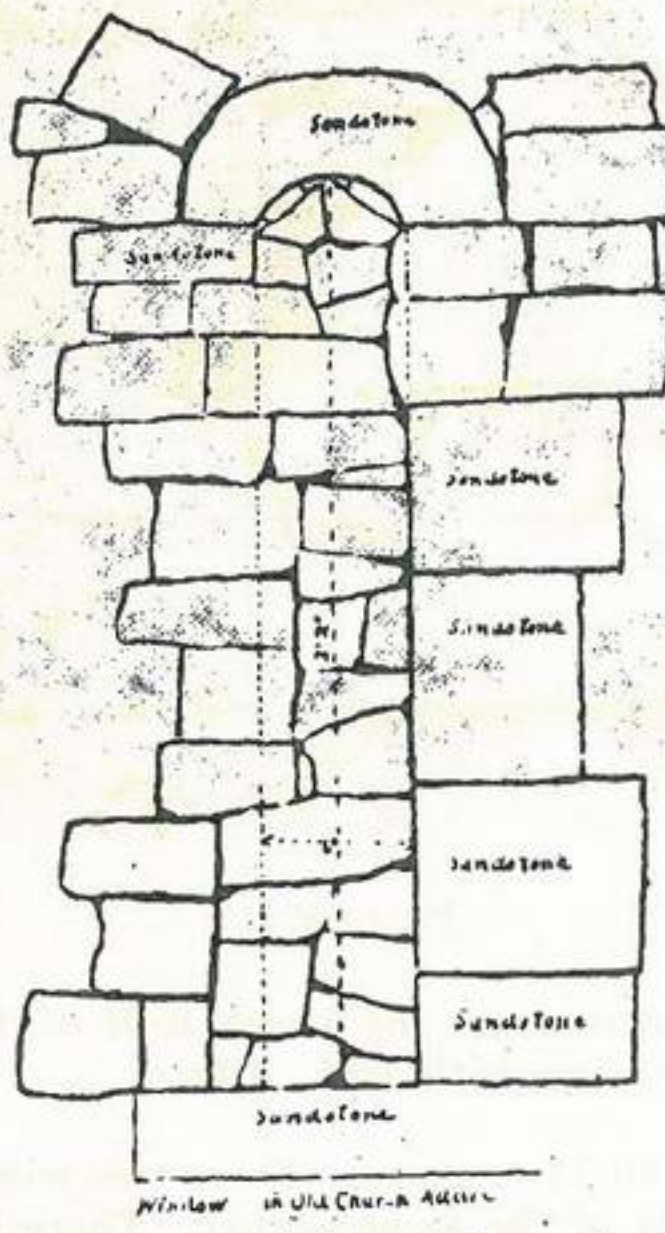

PLATE A.

Also the photograph on the plate, marked B. This window was very small, only

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6 inches wide and 3 feet 6 in. high, and exactly the same type and material as the east window in the chancel which is 6½ inches wide and 5 feet 4 inches high.

The point of interest is that the discovery of this window disproves the statement that the nave was a fifteenth century structure though the chancel

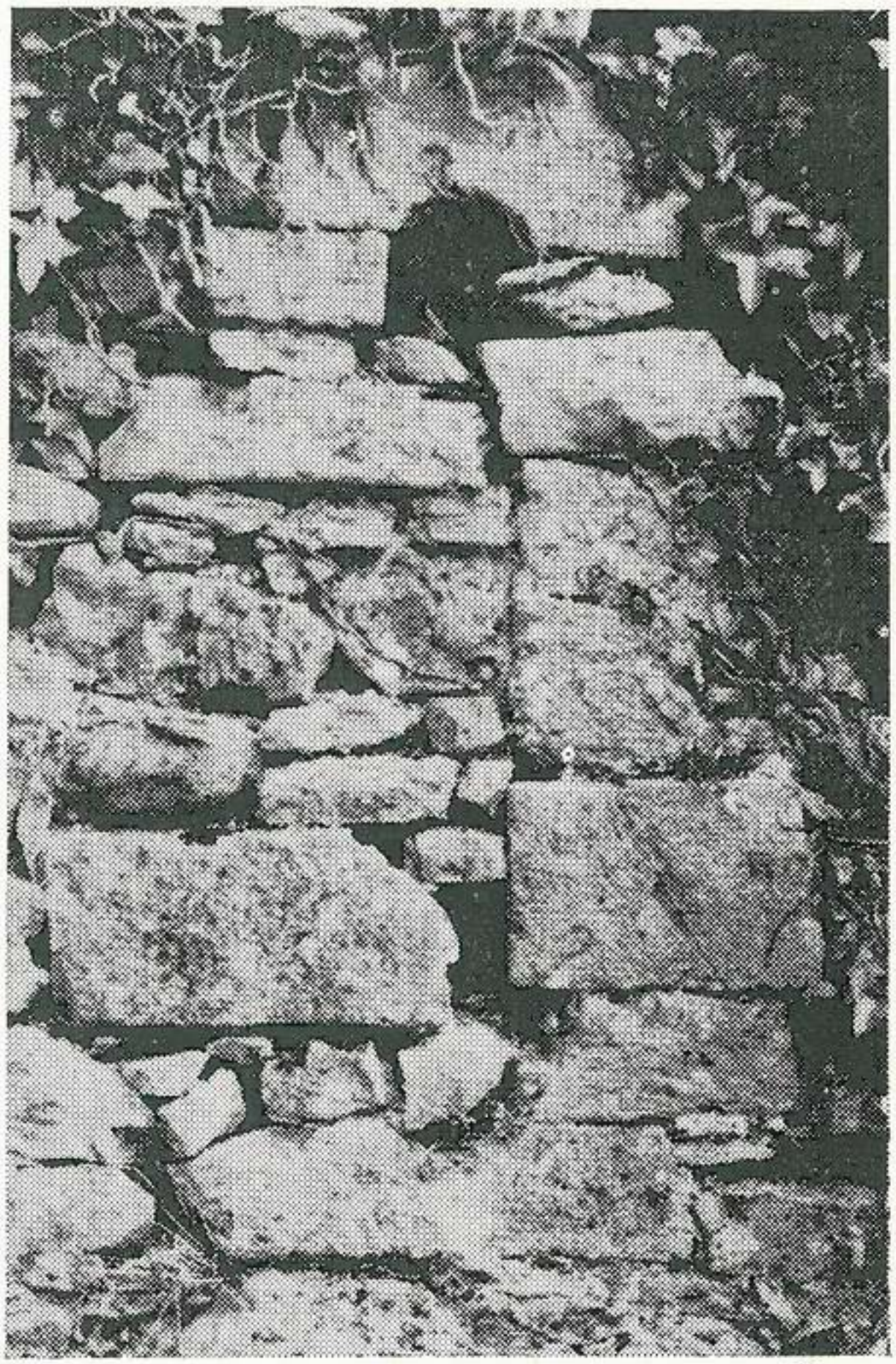

PLATE B.

Blocked up window in the north wall of the nave of St. Nicholas's Parish Church, Adare.

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must be dated back to the 10-11 century. These two windows at opposite ends of the church are undoubtedly of the same period. There is a small window in the south wall of the nave near the chancel arch which is of 15th century design and there is a window in the 15 century Hall of the Castle, which my father stated was taken from the old parish church when it was dismantled about 1811 and removed

to the Castle Hall. When he was young the insertion was obvious, this window, being of an ecclesiastical pattern and quite different from the other windows in the Hall and as the heads of the lights are remarkably similar to the head of the small window in the south side of the nave of the parish church referred to. See plate). The two pointed doorways have both been reconstructed. The north one was rebuilt and only the two bottom jamb stones are original and the south door is where there had been a window at a higher level. Some of the jamb stones of the door came from the window and have window bar holes in them. The return arch over the window is conspicuous, high up over the door. All this would point to a 15th century restoration of the nave. This church must have suffered considerable damage in Cromwellian times as the Royal Visitation of 1615 states that the chancel was then in repair but appears to have been abandoned before the end of the century.

THE CHANTRY CHAPEL

This chapel about 20 yards to the north of the old parish church is very interesting as Chantry Chapels are very unusual in Ireland. It has a crypt under the east end and the west end was lofted to form a croft or residence for the priest who said Mass daily for the repose of the souls of the founder and endower and his family. The holes for the joists which supported the floor of the croft are conspicuous. The writer remembers when the butt end of a burnt joist remained in one of the holes. The window high up in the gable has two window seats in it the same as are usually in the upper windows of castles.

It is usually stated that this chapel dates from the fifteenth century but this is obviously incorrect, as the stone dressings of the windows and doors are axe cut, not punch cut as they would have been in late fourteenth or fifteenth century. Also the east window is Early English, and has the deep rebate or recess to take an iron armature or frame that thirteenth and early fourteenth century stained glass was mounted in. The glass was leaded into grooves in the stone in late fourteenth and later windows. Examples of both types of glass mounting are to be seen in the Augustinian Priory (The C. of I. Church). In the chancel (early 14th century) the rebates can be seen in the very heavy mullions of the windows. In the south aisle (date 15th century) the much lighter mullions are without rebates and have grooves for the glass to be leaded directly into. The Franciscan Friary windows also shew these grooves.

The remaining portion of one of the jambs of a broken south window in this chapel also shows the rebate for an armature very distinctly, also the west window; all these features point to a 13th century or at the latest very early 14th century date for this very interesting chapel.

This is the only church in Adare which shows the marks of having been burnt. In a church with limestone dressings to the windows and doors the effects of fire are very conspicuous as the heat of the fire partially calcines the sharp edges and corners of the stones, particularly towards the top of windows where the heat is greatest. The first shower of rain causes these corners to flake away, leaving unmistakable evidence of the fire as the result is quite different from damage caused by weathering or mechanical fracture. The door of this chapel shows on the inside these marks, and also the Piscina. The east window has escaped (the wind must have been easterly at the time) but the west window was damaged. For typical examples of the effects of fire on limestone windows, see the chancel of the Collegiate Church of St. Peter and Paul, Kilmallock, also Curragh Chase house, south front. There is not the smallest trace of fire in the

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Franciscan Friary. The legend says it and some of the friars were burnt by Malby, though there are records that show that the room was sold by Sir Henry Wallop. There are no traces of fire on the Augustinian Priory but there was a fire on the outside of the Trinitarian Priory, now the R.C. Parish Church. This fire was low down below the window, to the west of the tower and extended to the corner of the tower. The inside of the window is intact. There were market stalls and thatched cottages up to the walls in 1810 as shewn in Plate 3 in the third Earl of Dunraven's monumental book, "Memorials of Adare."

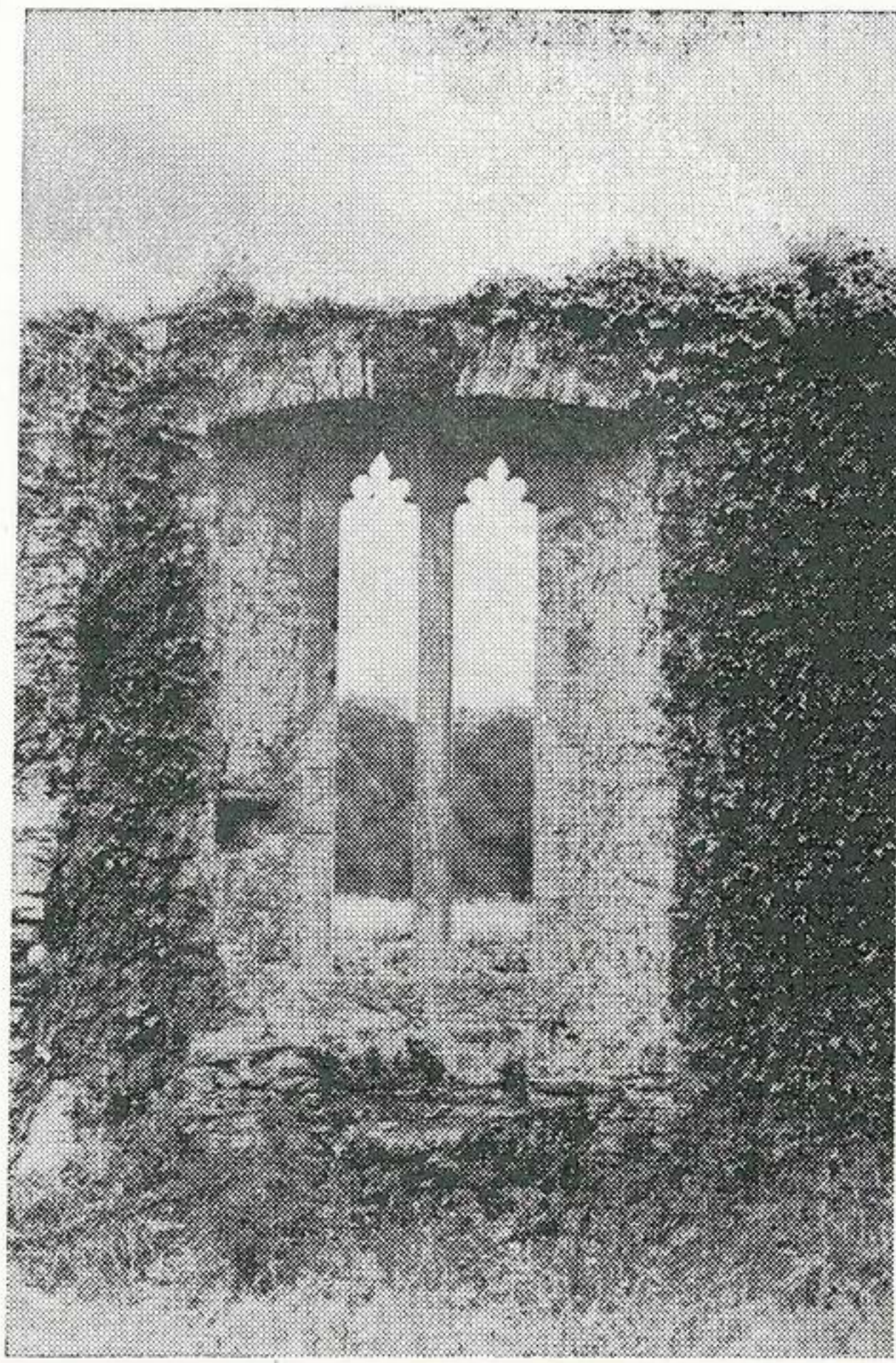

PLATE C.

Window removed from the Old Parish Church (St. Nicholas) and inserted in the South wall of the 15th century Hall of Adare Castle some time in the early part of the nineteenth cntury.

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