

100A No. 20

Tenby

Church of St. Mary the Virgin and its Adjuncts

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For structure, see Arch. Camb. I, iv, 229; II, ii, 327; II, iii, 185; III, xi, 240; IV, xi, 128, 335; Journal of Brit. Arch. Assoc. Vol. 41, 78. For monuments, Norris' Etchings of Tenby, 38; Arch. Camb. IV, xi, 128; Mason's Guide to Tenby, 7th Edition, 23. The churchyard was formerly entirely surrounded by buildings - ecclesiastical, domestic and municipal. The west end of the churchyard was covered by the premises of the Carmelite Convent. (Fenton, 457; Norris' Etchings, 48; Little England, 256). Of this only a gateway now remains. This in a more perfect condition was drawn by Norris. (See Phillipps' Collection, Cardiff Library, 15019, 96). Between this and the west door of the church stood a building used as a school (a view of this is among the above, No. 63). Next to the Convent ground coming eastward, was the Whites' House (Whites of Tenby and Henllan). This is figured by Norris in his Etchings. Then an arch entering the churchyard, next three little houses which reached up to the flying buttress, through this (behind the houses) there was a passage leading to some steps, which in turn led to the Fish Market, a building placed against the north wall of the chancel. On the east end the N.E. corner was occupied by two houses, then came an entry, two little houses, "The Ring o' Bells", another little house, site of old school, and at the corner (S.E.) stood the old Vicarage, which was abandoned for site of Old Rectory by Rev. Edmond Smith 1611. (See stone in wall at latter place). To the westward of the Vicarage was St. Isobell's Chapel, which is given among the P-cell of Possessions of Jesper Duke of Bedford. When Thomas Hanbury and Robert Davies held an inquiry in 1585, this building had been converted into a "chever"

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or charnel house, next it became the poor-house. In 1831 Norris describes it: "The lower part of the building is a low-arched stone dungeon, divided longitudinally into two cells for about one third of its length, with another wretched apartment at its extremity. To ascent the upper chamber (the abomination must be spoken) the visitor must pass through a small confined courtyard, round which are ranged the parish necessities". Westwards of St. Isobell's Chapel was a house known as Kite's Nest, described and figured in Arch. Camb. III, xiii, 203; then two houses and the archway. This still exists, blocked in on each side and used as a Parish Room. Then came the Jail and Town Hall. The latter was entered by steps leading out of the churchyard through a pointed stone doorway, and was lighted by a square-headed three light window (old pencil sketch). Below were two dungeons: these were approached from St. George's Street. (See Norris' Drawings, Phillipps' Collection, Cardiff, 15019, 32 and 97). These buildings in a sadly modified condition, are used as the offices of the Trustees for the Tenby Charities and as a Temperance Hotel. Westward was an important house, the remains of which may be seen behind the George Inn; probably there were no buildings between this house and the Carmelite premises. In comparatively late days a conduit stood here. (See Norris' View in the Phillipps' Collection at Cardiff, 15019, No. 101) The Registers of Tenby Church date back to 1711.