

LITTLE MISSENDEN

At Little Missenden, the Vicar, the Rev. W. H. Davis, continued his researches after Professor Tristram had completed the bulk of the work, and as a result some further fragments have been added to the already remarkable series of paintings in the church. The most important is a fragment of two figures above, and cut into by the 14th century window in the north chapel. One shows the head and upper part of a fairly large figure, with one hand apparently raised in blessing. From the position with regard to the other subjects on this wall, and the general attitude, the figure is probably that of the Angel in the Annunciation, the drapery folds of another figure on the right belonging most likely to the Virgin, the rest of the figure having been destroyed by a plaster repair, and by the destruction of the upper part of the wall when the roof was altered. The Annunciation would fit in, in this position, with the sequence of the Infancy subjects of this 13th century series on the north chapel wall. This is the second example of an Annunciation in the church. The area of mediaeval painting and of the later framed texts on the chancel arch (including a very elaborate frame with side pillars), as well as the 13th century rose and tendril design on the west wall of the north chapel, has been considerably extended, though no further subject can be identified. Framed texts have been found on each side of the west window of the tower, thus extending the existence of painting to every part of the church. Mr. Davis has identified the texts as—South side, Eccles. xi., 9; north side,

Eccles xii., 1 (part), and immediately following, Prov. xxi, 17, the word "sporte" as noted in margin A being used instead of "pleasure." The references to youth, strength and sport are without doubt meant for the especial benefit of the young bell-ringers of the place, and this is an interesting example of the way in which the "sentencing" of churches in the 16th and 17th centuries was carried out.