

ARE THE "MARKS" IN CERTAIN
WIRRAL CHURCHES
GUIDES TO MEASUREMENTS ?

UPON the walls of various churches in Cheshire, and possibly elsewhere, are to be seen certain scorings,¹ which are not mason marks, and for which it has hitherto been difficult to find any explanation. These consist of vertical lines, crossed by horizontal ones, and occasionally bounded by, or combined with, diagonal lines. In some cases these are carefully incised, so as to give exact spaces, in others they are rough and inexact. Examples exist on the exterior north wall of Eastham Church, in the belfry of Backford Church, near the porch and in the tower of Thornton-le-Moors; and at Birkenhead Priory there are traces on the refectory wall of a space that seems to have been carefully drawn, with both vertical, diagonal, and horizontal lines. If the theory of the spacing of the plans of churches into proportioned rectangular figures, derived from a geometrical basis, should be a correct one, a probable explanation of these curious markings is suggested. They are possibly plans for the guidance of the masons in constructing portions of the building. If the measure of each unit of space is known to the workmen, it would be immaterial whether such plans were carefully or roughly drawn; they would use, in working out the masonry in hand, so many units of known measure, according to the arrangement shown by these plans.

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¹ See page 189.
