

OLD MIRFIELD CHURCH.—In answer to “E. P. P.,” in CLXX. (see also XCD., Oct. 2nd, 1899, the old parish church of Mirfield was a simple parallelogram, the tower of which is exceeded in height by the roof of the splendid edifice which, standing on a commanding situation, can be seen for miles around. Not having the richness or ornament of Halesy-hill, Halifax, or the Parish Church, Doncaster, the new church is yet one of the finest specimens of modern Early English Gothic, or, as Mr. Beresford Hope calls it, “First Pointed style,” in the kingdom. The account of the origin of the old church is very interesting, and is given in a Latin MS. in Hopkinson’s “Collection of Documents,” from which we learn that up to the year 1261 Mirfield formed a part of the parish of Dewsbury. “It happened,” says the old document, “that as the lady of Sir John Heton, the Baroness of Mirfield, was going to mass before dawn on Christmas Day to the Parish Church of Dewsbury, a distance of three miles, that she was waylaid and robbed, and her principal attendant murdered, at a place called Raffenthorpen layne. On the same day, whilst she was at dinner, at nine o’clock in the morning (that being then the fashionable hour), two mendicant ecclesiastics came to crave her charity, telling her at the same time that they were going to Rome, where her husband, Sir John, was then residing. On this intimation she sat down and wrote a letter to her husband narrating the horrid scene, and begged of him to make interest with the Pope to alter the chapel of Mirfield into a parochial church, that the inhabitants might no longer be exposed to the dangers she had encountered on the way to the Parish Church. This letter she confided to the priest, who duly delivered it to the Knight, whose suit was so successful that his Holiness elevated Mirfield into a rectory, and bestowed the patronage of the church upon Sir John Heton and his posterity.” The old church was pulled down when the present one was erected. The foundations of the walls are left and railed in, and the tower still remains, possibly to contrast with the glorious massive modern tower, one of the most beautiful examples of Sir Gilbert Scott’s genius and skill.—J. A. CLAPHAM, The Knowle, Mirfield.