



CANON WM. VINCENT-JACKSON, M.A.

## OUR PARISH CHURCHES.

### VIII.—ST. MARY'S, BOTTESFORD.

**B**OTTESFORD is the most northern village of Leicestershire. It is not far from Nottingham and only four miles from

Belvoir Castle, the seat of the Duke of Rutland. The village has not yet lost its old-world appearance. Its mutilated market-cross, with the arms of De Roos obliterated beyond present recognition, is an interesting feature, rendered all the more so by the adjoining stocks and whipping-post, where many a quaint scene must have been enacted in former days. In still earlier times Roman cohorts must have crossed the ford which still exists on the little river Devon at a point where it is traversed by the Roman road which once connected the old Foss Road from Lincoln to Leicester, and Ermine Street, which went from Lincoln to Stamford. Not far from this spot stands the church on well-chosen ground, erect and elegant; and being dedicated to the Virgin, and seen for miles round in the Vale of Belvoir, it has acquired for itself the graceful title of the "Lady of the Vale," whilst its monuments, crowding the chancel, have made others de-

scribe it as "a corner of Westminster Abbey."

Taking as our guide the late Professor Freeman's rule, to examine first of all the exterior of a building, the general impression we receive is that of the prevalence in the nave and spire of the Early Perpendicular style, with a probable date of 1400, while the eastern jamb of a priest's door in the chancel wall proclaims that part of the edifice, said formerly to have been the nave of a previous church, to be of the earliest type of Early English. The height of the steeple is 210 feet, the length of the nave 75 feet, and of the chancel 60 feet, while the breadth of the nave and two aisles is 58 feet. The most effective feature is the clerestory, occupying the whole wall-space, and having on either side eleven three-light windows, separated by bold mouldings, which terminate in large, grotesque figures.

In the south porch are the remains of a parvise, or priest's chamber, formerly approached by an outside staircase. On entering the church, the imposing effect produced is due to the loftiness of the nave, the Tudor clerestory windows already referred to, the

