

But as the influence of the sarcophagus-altar of the catacombs extended, the tendency was more and more to make the altar a pronounced oblong in shape. Especially was this the case in the later English churches, where the altar slab attained in time very large dimensions. The Norman altar at Forthampton is 5 ft. 3½ in. long; that at Claypole, near Newark, 7 ft. 2 in.; that at the little chapel of St Mary Magdalen, Ripon, is 7 ft. 7 in.; that at St Clements, Sandwich, is 8 ft. 3 in.; while the high altar of Arundel is 12 ft. 6 in.,<sup>1</sup> that in the Lady chapel of



H. E. M.

## Christchurch: Lady Chapel

Christchurch, Hants, is 12 ft. That at Tewkesbury is of Purbeck marble, and was 13 ft. 8 in. long; but in 1730 it was cut in two to provide seats for the church porch. The two halves were put together again at a modern restoration, when the slab was shortened to 13 ft. 6 in.<sup>2</sup>

There was a special reason why the high altar should be large. At first the altar slab was regarded as so holy that

<sup>1</sup> Illustrated in Parker's *Concise Glossary*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> It may be added that the length of an altar should be proportioned to the width of a chancel—the chancel of Arundel church is 30 ft. wide.