Birstall Parish Church

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BIRSTALL PARISH CHURCH.

BIRSTALL (BRIARFIELD) CHURCH, is now one of the most beautiful churches in Yorkshire. It was re-opened in 1870, after a restoration extending over five years. Scarcely any part of the old church remains except the tower. The present edifice is doubtless the successor of three other churches: the one in existence previous to this being probably built about the time of Henry VIII. The Registers date from 1558. On the north side of the chancel is the burial place of the Nevilles, and also of the Greenes of Liversedge Hall.

On the south side is the Oakwell Hall Choir, which formerly belonged to the Batts of Oakwell.

The Rev. William Margetson Heald was appointed Vicar of Birstall in 1801, and died in 1836. He was succeeded by his son, who was a Canon of Ripon and died in 1875, at the age of 71.

These two gentlemen are the prototypes of the character of Rev. Cyril Hall in "Shirley." [See Canon Heald's letter to Miss Nussey in "Charlotte Brontë and her Circle," p. 443.]