

CHAPTER I

Introductory

THE initial difficulty in the way of acquiring a correct notion of the value and use of stained and painted glass is the fact that the old coloured windows—our only trustworthy guides—have come down to our time in so fragmentary a state. Take, with one or two exceptions, any old parish church in England: very seldom is all the old glass left, even in a single window. Here is a figure of a saint, there the symbol of an evangelist; in one window is a mutilated border and, in another, are a few quarries with designs of leafage, small animals or birds, or monograms.

As illustrative of this state of things with regard to parish churches, we may mention the 13th century glass in the south chancel window at Chetwode church, Bucks; the history of St Laurence in the east window of Ludlow church; the *Fesse* window in the Cordwainers' chapel, the pilgrims receiving St Edward's ring from St John in the Fletchers' chapel and other ancient glass much restored, all in the same church; and the very fragmentary glass—a few loose pieces only—at Knowle church, Warwickshire.

The case of Knowle deserves attention, for it is an excellent illustration of the extent to which, since the 17th century, ancient glass has disappeared from our churches. When Sir William Dugdale, herald and



Fragment of border and quarry (Roydon)

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antiquary, visited this church in 1640, he found three painted windows which had been set up by Thomas Dabridgecourt, Sir William Wigston and one Aylesbury, also, in the tracery, seven shields of arms borne by angels. By 1793 all that was left of the windows was a fragment of an inscription—these words only, “*p̄ bono statu orate*”—and a few fragments of saints and kneeling figures, while, of the heraldry, there remained only two shields. To-day we shall look in vain in the windows of Knowle church (which was restored in 1860) for the smallest fragment of this old glass, although it is true that a few scraps of it are kept in a box at the church.

To these we may add St Mary’s church, Shrewsbury, with its great 14th century *Jesse* window, kneeling figures and other 14th and 15th century glass; the splendid Perpendicular church at Cirencester, where is some 15th century glass, figures of saints and donors and heraldry; Lindsell, with its quaint 13th century figures in the east window; Great Bardfield and Shalford both shewing very fine 14th century heraldry; Wimbish, where, in the north aisle—which is, really, the parish church of Thundersley—are two 14th century windows which retain their original heraldic tracery glass and canopy tops, all these in Essex; Stanford-on-Avon with 14th and 15th century canopied figures, kneeling donors and heraldry; and Long Melford, which contains very considerable remains of 15th century glass, saints, kneeling figures in heraldic surcoats and mantles and many shields bearing the arms of the local family of

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Clopton and its alliances and, also, of the de Veres, de la Poles and other famous names of the 15th century.

In the remains of conventual churches we can hardly expect much old glass, for they were, for the most part, dismantled of their furniture and fittings at the Dissolution of the religious houses. Such of them, however, as still possess old glass tell the same tale as the parish churches. The Benedictine Priory church, Great Malvern, has lost much of its ancient glass: of sixty panels depicting Biblical subjects which were on the north side of the nave twelve and a few fragments only remain, while the Doom window which was at the west end of the church—the usual position for that subject—is now represented by fragments in the great east window. Of the four great Doctors of the Church once in the nave, one only, in a fragmentary form, is left in the transept. The figures of Prince Arthur and Sir Reginald Bray are *in situ* in the north window of the transept, and the acts of St Werstan are in the clerestory of the north choir aisle. Despite these losses there is still a considerable quantity of old glass at Great Malvern. At Little Malvern Priory church, there is some glass of Edward IV's time in the east window—figures of Edward, Prince of Wales, his four sisters and fragments of their mother—poor remains of the original window of twelve main lights with heraldry in the tracery. Of the heraldry two shields—those of Edward IV and the Prince of Wales—are left. The Cistercian Abbey church of Merevale in Warwick-

shire can boast only a few fragments. In the magnificent nave—almost all that is left—of the mitred Abbey of Waltham Holy Cross, Essex, not a scrap of the old windows is left, though, perhaps, we ought to claim the well-known Perpendicular glass in the east window at St Margaret's, Westminster, as belonging to Waltham Abbey, for it was there, by gift of Henry VIII, or possibly Henry VII, for a few years.

From Westminster Abbey the greater part of the ancient glass has disappeared. The clerestory windows of Henry VII's chapel, the glass in which chapel set the model for that in King's College chapel, Cambridge, now contain only, in the tracery lights, red roses and shields of France (modern) and England and, in the central east window a cut-down figure of a prophet in blue tunic and ruby mantle, with a scroll inscribed *Laudate nomen domini*, beneath a canopy: below the prophet is an angel bearing a scroll. The east window of the chapel is nearly filled with Henry VII's arms and badges—roses, red and white, and the two roses impaled, portcullises, crown in thornbush and fleurs-de-lis—and most of the one hundred and thirteen compartments of the tracery of the west window retain their original glass—angels holding shields bearing initials **H E**, for Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, and royal badges, among them, the daffodil or leek bulb, often repeated. In the tops of the main lights of the west window are the tops of the original canopies which covered the figures once in those lights. The north ambulatory shews a curiosity in one of its windows—the original head of Catherine of Aragon removed

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from the east window of St Margaret's church in the course of repairs to make way for a copy. Why this was done is not apparent.

The clerestory windows of the apse are filled with much fragmentary glass of all periods—canopied figures of SS. Edward, John the Baptist, Melitus and others, with shields above their heads, and all very much made up. In two west windows of the north transept are some 13th century white glass geometrical medallions with foliated patterns in grisaille, survivals, probably, from the otherwise lost glazing of the eastern part of the church. In the west window of the north aisle is a mosaic mainly of old glass of every period, put together to suggest a figure, the head of which is modern, clad in blue and ruby and holding a white staff. There are good 14th century ruby and 15th century blue in this composition and the crowned portcullis badge (late 15th century) at the foot is fairly complete.

There is a piece of patchwork, similar to that just mentioned, in the west window of the south aisle. The figure in this case is real—mostly original 14th century glass—clad in armour with a surcoat bearing the royal arms—France (ancient) and England quarterly. The fragmentary glass is, in the main, pattern work of the 14th century and the red rose at the foot is early 16th century.

In the Jerusalem Chamber are seven 13th century medallions which are probably part of the original glazing of the 13th century church: they represent the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Day of Pente-

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Head of Catherine of Aragon (Westminster Abbey)

cost, the beheading of St John the Baptist, the stoning of St Stephen, a legend of St Nicholas and the slaughter of the Holy Innocents. There is, also, a 17th century shield with the arms of John Williams, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, impaled, on the dexter side, with the arms of the See of Lincoln and, on the sinister side, with those of the Deanery of Westminster: this was to commemorate Williams's holding of the Bishopric and Deanery at the same time. Williams, though a pluralist, was a great benefactor to Westminster Abbey.

In each of the eight lights of the long window of the Jericho Parlour is a panel of 16th century heraldry—arms of the Deanery of Westminster, those attributed to St Edward the Confessor, and France (modern) and England quarterly; also, royal badges—the portcullis, the red rose with the white rose in pretence, and the phoenix and tower badge of Jane Seymour. The window of the lobby between the Jerusalem Chamber and the Jericho Parlour retains its original glass. There are three royal badges—the portcullis, a red with white rose and a castle triple-towered—all, like those in the Jericho Parlour, royally crowned and set in plain white quarries.

At Tewkesbury Abbey church there are seven windows in the choir filled with fine 14th century glass—remains of a Doom window, figures of patriarchs, kings and prophets, all under canopies and set in quarries. There are, also, several figures in armour and long heraldic surcoats representing Earls of Gloucester, and there are shields of arms in most

of the lights. This glass, which was given to the Abbey in 1326 by Eleanor de Clare, wife of Hugh le Despenser, has been discreetly restored, releaded and rearranged—for it had fallen into a sad state of disorder—and now presents as good an idea of 14th century glass in original condition as we are likely to see: in particular, the exceptionally fine tones of the green glass in these windows should be noted, as also, the fact that the coloured glass, with the exception of purple, which has deteriorated to a considerable extent, is, on the whole, remarkably free from corrosion.

At Dunster Priory church in Somersetshire, there are, among other fragments, a pilgrim's hat with scallop shells, and a crown, all that are left of a head of St James of Compostella and the figure of a king, which were complete in 1808. There is, also, at Dunster a quarry decorated with a pastoral staff and a scroll bearing the words, "W. Donesteere Abbas de Cliva", a reference to William Seylake, Abbot of Cleeve in 1420.

In the 18th century the glass of the great east window—a *tree of Jesse*—was still *in situ*, but by 1808 only a few fragments of it were left. In 1808, too, the arms of Luttrell were in a window of the north aisle of Dunster church, but they are no longer there.

In the college chapels at Oxford and at Cambridge, the loss and destruction of old glass have been, perhaps, as considerable as in the parish churches. At Oxford, the 17th century windows of University

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College chapel, painted by Abraham Van Linge, shortly before the Civil War, have survived, and at Balliol, there are, in the side windows of the chapel, fragments of 16th century glass from the old chapel which was destroyed in 1856, while other pieces—arms of benefactors—of 14th century date, are in the windows of the lower library. Here, in some cases, while the shields of arms have been preserved, the inscriptions under them have been destroyed, highly illustrative of the carelessness with which painted glass was formerly treated. The chapel at Merton, in the side windows of its choir, can shew the oldest glass in Oxford, that given, in 1283, by Henry de Mannsfeld, who subsequently became Chancellor of the University. These windows, seven on each side of the choir, are patterned white glass of the kind called trellis windows, with a canopied figure in each light, the central figure, a saint, standing and the side figures kneeling and bearing scrolls inscribed *Henricus de Mannesfeld me fecit*. The two south-eastern windows are exceptions to this arrangement, for in them all the figures—Apostles and saints—are standing. There are coloured bosses and roundels, some with heads and others ornamental, above and below the figures: the borders are leaves on coloured ground, or castles and fleurs-de-lis alternating with coloured glass. In the west window of the ante-chapel, besides figures bearing scrolls in the tracery, are a Crucifixion with Our Lady and St John, Our Lady with the Divine Child and three saints.

In the library of the same college is some old