

On a Painted Glass Window in Morley Church, Derbyshire.

By GEORGE BAILEY.



THE ancient window, of which Plate VII. is a representation, is one of a series of five late perpendicular windows, which were removed to Morley Church, together with their glazing, from the neighbouring Abbey of Dale, at its dissolution in 1539, and incorporated in the north aisle of that church, which seems to have been rebuilt for the purpose. The usual opinion used to be that these windows came from the dining hall or refectory; but Mr. St. John Hope has, we think, given satisfactory reasons for supposing that they came from the Dale cloisters, which were rebuilt by Abbot John Stanley, 1478 to 1482.*

All the five windows were originally glazed with painted stories, and were protected by outer shutters of wood, but about the end of last century, the shutters having decayed, were not renewed; the church was "beautified," and a most careless era set in, which continued until 1829, when Mr. Fox, the late rector, first entered on the curacy. The late Mr. Bateman said that "It was the custom of the friends and visitors at the village, at times of hospitality, such as Christmas and the Wakes, to show their regard for the church and its interesting objects, by pulling a bit of stained glass out of the windows to take home as a relic, or as an object of amusement for children." †

* *Journal of the Derbyshire Arch. and Nat. His. Society*, vol. v., p. 91.

† *Reliquary*, vol. xiii., p. 132.

The old glazing of two of the five windows has now gone, fragments excepted, and the other three were restored to some extent in 1847, and with much judgement, considering the date. Two of these three old windows, giving the legends in compartments of St. Robert of Knaresborough and the Invention of the Cross, have been already lithographed, and form part of the illustrations to the *History of Morley Church*, by the late Rev. S. Fox, M.A. The present window is here given entire for the first time.* It is at the east end of the north aisle. It had originally four lights, like the others, but one has been filled up to form space for a mural tablet in memory of Jacinth Sacheverel and his wife. What the subjects of the two windows now lost, and the fourth light of this one were, we have no means of ascertaining. Mr. Fox assured us that when he first came to Morley, he found a very large quantity of broken fragments of painted glass, which he caused to be used as far as possible in filling in the blank spaces of the windows when they were restored by Warrington in 1847; a large number were also used in making up a very beautiful mosaic window in the south aisle, near the priest's door. This fragmentary window has always appeared to us the most gem-like in the church, containing as it does such a harmonious blending of some charming bits of color. We may mention here that the fragment of glass representing St. Catherine embodied into this window, was not among the glass Mr. Fox found, but was put in by Warrington to fill up, and it had never formed a part of the glass originally belonging to the place.

So far as is known at present, the central light of the window now under notice, is a quite unique representation of the legend of St. Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne. St. Ursula is here represented as ascending up into heaven with hands outspread in benediction, while the eleven thousand virgins, her companions in martyrdom, are represented by the eleven small figures in the sheet, which is being borne up after her by angels who hold its corners, so that they form a curious bundle of figures

* The centre light is outlined in *Churches of Derbyshire*, vol. iv., plate xiv.



W. Bailey



1 INCH SCALE.

ANCIENT WINDOW. MORLEY CHURCH, DERBYSHIRE.

DEMOISE & SONS LONDON & BERRY

in the act of adoration, held together in the cloth. The writing on the phylactery is *Sta · ursula · cum · xi · M · birginum · tu · angelis · ad · eundem · in · celum · **

The story of St. Ursula is curious, and its main features, as gathered from the Cologne version of it, given by Mrs. Jameson in "*Sacred and Legendary Art*," are as follows:—Ursula was the daughter of Theonotus, King of Brittany, and his wife Daria. Queen Daria died when Ursula was fifteen; it then fell to her lot to fill the place of her mother, this she did to admiration. Ursula was famous for her great beauty, learning, and virtue; and also for her decided objection to marriage. At the same period there also reigned in England a king named Agrippinus, who had a son Conon, who was a man of great beauty and physical strength. He heard of Ursula, and sought her in marriage. The king, his father, accordingly sent ambassadors to the king of Brittany, who, knowing that his daughter had made a vow of virginity, was puzzled how to act, not desiring to offend Agrippinus. Seeing how things were, Ursula came to the rescue and requested that she might be permitted to reply. Her request being granted, she delivered the following message to the Ambassadors: "I hold myself bound to your king as to a second father, and to the prince his son as my brother and bridegroom, for to no other will I ever listen. But I have to ask three things. First, he shall give for me as my ladies and companions ten virgins of the noblest blood in his kingdom, and to each of these a thousand attendants, and to me also a thousand maidens to wait on me. Secondly, he shall permit me for the space of three years to honour my virginity, and, with my companions, to visit the holy shrines where repose the bodies of the 'saints.' And my third demand is, that the prince and his court shall receive baptism; for other than a perfect Christian I cannot wed."

The princess Ursula thought by this means to place an insur-

* Dr. Cox remarks that the wording of this inscription, as well as the number of virgins depicted, is most strikingly confirmatory of the view that "eleven thousand" is a comparatively modern gloss for "eleven"—the M signifying martyrs and not thousands.

mountable obstacle in the way of Conon's suit ; but in this she was quite mistaken, for the ambassadors took back such a tale of her marvellous beauty and accomplishments, that a directly contrary effect was the result ; for Conon was ready to agree to anything. Accordingly the king, his father, issued a proclamation ; and in a very short time the required number of maidens presented themselves at his court. The princess Ursula received them with gladness and talked to them so nicely that she persuaded all those who had not been baptised to be so at once ; and her words inspired them all with so much zeal that they agreed to follow her wheresoever she might lead them. She then sent for prince Conon, and explained to him how she had seen a vision in which she had been enjoined to make a pilgrimage to Rome with her companions, and told him that he was to remain with her father until their return.

All these maidens then embarked on board a fleet which had been prepared for them ; and as they took no sailors with them, it is not at all surprising that after some time they found themselves at Cologne instead of at Rome. This, however, the chronicler says was brought about in a providential way, in order that she might see another vision in which she is told that she and her companions should shortly suffer martyrdom near Cologne.

This seems to have afforded them considerable satisfaction, and they set out for Rome overland, crossing the Alps into Italy, and having endured many vicissitudes, they at length arrived at the sacred city.

At that time Cyriacus was Bishop of Rome, and he was at first much puzzled and finally delighted with Ursula and her companions, whom he honourably lodged and entertained during their stay. In the meantime, the son of Agrippinus became impatient at the long absence, and lack of tidings of his bride. He at once set out in quest of her, and curiously enough arrived in Rome at the same time as Ursula and her companions ; they met and after some conversation he was induced to be baptised by Cyriacus, at the same time changing his name to *Etherius*, and resigning all claim to the hand of Ursula, he decided to seek with

her and her companions the crown of martyrdom, promised in the vision, at Cologne.

Their martyrdom was brought about by the wicked influence of two Roman captains, who commanded the Imperial troops in Germany, who were then in Rome. They sent a message to the barbarian King of the Huns, who was at that time engaged in besieging Cologne; the consequence was that on their return to Cologne, accompanied by a great train of Cardinals and others, headed by the Pope, the whole of them were cruelly massacred by the Huns, and the ancient chronicle concludes thus—"her spirit ascended into heaven with all the glorious sisterhood of martyrs whom she had led to death." It is this last passage that the old glass painter has depicted in the window now at Morley.

The 14th century was the period when glass painters first began to paint subject pieces with a nearer approach to nature, and attempted greater things in light and shade, than had been done before. In the 11th and 12th centuries, little had been done in the way of *painting* on glass; pieces of glass of which the body was coloured, and on which the subject was drawn with a reddish brown enamel, being all that was attempted in the way of actual painting at that time; but in the 14th century such work as we see in the lights on each side of the St. Ursula subject, began to be executed, and was further improved in colouring and shading, though not perhaps in design, during the 15th century.

The figure of the B.V. Mary on the left side, is a good example; the figure is dignified and well designed, in which respect it differs from the Magdalen on the right, though we think this difference is owing in a great measure to some damage it had received in its transit, before it was restored. For it must be kept in mind that when Mr. Fox first found these windows, they were put together in a very primitive fashion, the pieces of glass being much mixed up, and not at all in their proper places, some, indeed many, being lost, were renewed, and these new parts are very observable in this particular window. This allowance being made, it will be admitted that the entire window is by no means

a bad example of such work, and was certainly done by a clever artist. We may draw attention to the architectural arrangement of the backgrounds of these three lights, which is Decorative and Transitional, passing into Perpendicular. The lines in this tabernacle work are made out in yellow enamel on white glass. Such architectural arrangements are characteristic of the glass of the 14th and 15th centuries. Unfortunately, it has been so much broken, and is put together in such a manner, that it is extremely difficult to say whether it originally belonged to the figures which it surrounds or not; it is certainly incomplete, and does not finish properly at the top, which leads to the supposition that the birds and the fringes did not originally belong to them.

It is also a question whether the processional groups below are of the same date, they appear to be later Perpendicular, and of the same date as the other two windows of the series. They differ very much in style of work from the two large figures; and these also differ from the figures in two other windows on the south side of the church, of which it is intended to give illustrations in a future volume of this journal. They are of the same period, but some parts are earlier than others. These three lower groups, together with the narrative glass of St. Robert, and the Invention of the Cross, seem undoubtedly to be Abbot Stanley's glass of 1478 to 1482, whilst the Ursula and these groups are probably a century, and certainly more than half-a-century older. Perhaps they were inserted in the new cloister windows, much as we now find them, from the older cloister windows, the Abbot preserving the best of the previous windows. There are several English instances of painted glass older than the tracery in which it is set.

The three groups in the base of the window were supposed by Mr. Fox to be illustrative of the *Te Deum*—"The Holy Church," "The Glorious Company of the Apostles," and "the Noble Army of Martyrs." It is a likely supposition, and it is by no means impossible that they form part of a group of twelve pictures, all designed to illustrate the *Te Deum*.

The left hand group is clearly typical of the Church. It is led by a Pope, immediately followed by a Cardinal and a Bishop, and

amid the tonsured group behind is a prior with his staff. The label from the Pope's mouth bears:—*Tibi laus tibi gl̄ia*. The next two words are uncertain, but Mr. Fox read them as:—*tibi decet honor*.

The central group is that of the Twelve Apostles headed by St. Peter, bearing the keys, of great size. From him proceed the words:—*Et decet laus et honor d̄ne*.

The right hand group may represent the Noble Army of Martyrs, for although there are no symbols of martyrdom, the figures all have a saintly halo or nimbus, and consist of kings and queens and men and women of different ages. The legend seems to be:—*In sæcla semp̄ beatia*.

At any rate, these three groups have no connection with the subjects above them, the whole window being probably composed of the remains of several, of which the connecting links are now past finding out, and can only be conjectured. That which remains is of great interest, and we hope that these ancient fragments will always be preserved with scrupulous care, as curious examples both of the faith and of the art of a past period.