

XXIV.—ON THE WINDOWS IN THE SOUTH WALL OF
THE CHANCEL OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, JARROW.

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At the last meeting of this Society I read a paper on "The Church and Monastery of St. Paul at Jarrow." After the reading of that paper, a criticism was offered to which my present remarks are a rejoinder. It was said that I need not have gone so far away as Berkshire and Buckinghamshire to find examples of windows of the same type as those at Jarrow. I might have found windows of the same character, and of unquestionably post-Norman date, at many places much nearer, as, for instance, at Pittington.

Since last meeting I have examined Pittington Church, and have also visited and revisited several churches in Northumberland and Durham, which possess features that will serve to throw light on our present enquiry. The windows at Pittington bear no real resemblance to those in the south wall of Jarrow chancel. They are windows of the plainest Norman type, quite similar to several which exist in the castle at Newcastle. True, the Pittington windows are covered with plaster; but in one case the plaster is so thin that the character of the masonry can easily be seen. Much better than any words of mine, the drawing on the opposite page will show the wide difference between the Pittington windows and those at Jarrow. It is sufficient to say that whereas the jambs of the Jarrow windows consist of single stones set on end, those at Pittington are simply of walled masonry; and whilst the window heads at Jarrow consist of single arched-stones, those at Pittington are constructed of several voussoirs.

The evidence, however, that the windows at Jarrow are of Saxon date, is abundant. Without invoking the authority of Sir Gilbert

G. Scott, Mr. Bloxam, or Mr. Longstaffe, we may, I hope, decide the matter, and decide it finally, by comparison. There are two windows in the west gable of Monkwearmouth Church. These windows belong to the works of Benedict Biscop. There is one point, and only one, in which they differ structurally from the windows at Jarrow. This is, the presence of baluster shafts in the windows at Wearmouth, and their absence at Jarrow. This, however, proves nothing. The windows in which the shafts are found are in the *end* of a church, and those in which they are not found are in the *side*. This circumstance may, for aught we know, account for the difference. On the other hand we find many points of identity between the style of the Jarrow windows and that of those at Wearmouth. The latter can only be partially seen externally, the tower hiding one jamb and one impost of each window. I have drawn one of these windows as seen from below, and have placed beside it a sketch of the interior of the same window. Compare these drawings with those of the three windows at Jarrow, and the points of resemblance are at once evident.

Not only at Monkwearmouth, however, do we find windows similar to those at Jarrow. We find them in the Saxon church of Escombe, near Bishop Auckland—two in the south wall, and one in the west gable. Mr. Longstaffe has written so admirably on Escombe Church that, henceforth, no one should mention it without quoting him. He speaks of it as “a church, Saxon from end to end.” He happily describes the Escombe windows as “Jarrow-like lights.” I have drawn external elevations of these windows, and interior views of the two in the south wall. The close resemblance between them and those at Jarrow, seen either from without or from within, is proof of the pre-Norman date of the latter.

Another window of the same type may be seen on the west side of the tower at Ovingham. Its pre-Norman date is proved by the existence of belfry lights far above, of closely similar character to those in the tower of Monkwearmouth, which although later than the original “porticus ingressus” beneath, are still admitted to be Saxon. Belfry lights of the same character may be seen at Billingham and St. Andrew's, Bywell. In the windows at Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, and Ovingham, there are features which evidently bear some relationship to the “long and short” work of Saxon architecture. And this can also be

said of the jambs of the belfry-lights at Billingham, Monkwearmouth, Ovingham, and Bywell, as well as of doorways, hereafter to be referred to, at Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, and Escombe. The chancel arch at Escombe also presents the same features, and, though bearing no testimony to my present point, more distinctly than any other structure in Northumberland or Durham, the tower of Whittingham. But at Ovingham, in the same storey of the tower as the window already mentioned, indeed directly opposite to it, we have an arched opening into the nave in which this feature is very pronounced, each jamb consisting of six courses, three long and three short.

Still another window of the same type exists in the south wall of the tower of St. Andrew's, Bywell, and of this as well as of that at Ovingham I have drawn external elevations. Internally the masonry of both these windows is covered with plaster; but the general form, splayed at the top, bottom, and sides, is the same as at Jarrow and Escombe.¹

All this is evidence of the Saxon date of the chancel of Jarrow church, and will, I hope, be accepted as decisive.

To a paper on windows may I be allowed to add a brief paragraph on doorways. There is a walled-up doorway in the north wall of Jarrow chancel. No one, I think, can compare this doorway with the north and south entrances to the "porticus ingressus" at Monkwearmouth without coming to the conclusion that they belong to the same period. There is the same approximation to "long and short" work in each, and the remaining jamb of the ancient doorway by which Jarrow chancel was entered from the south presents identically the same features.

¹ The following description of Saxon windows, from a paper read to the Lincoln Diocesan Architectural Society, in 1859, by the Rev. George Atkinson, will be of interest here:—"The windows were narrow, and mostly small on the outside, but very widely splayed within, so as to admit much light. The jambs or sides are sometimes of long and short work, and the arch is commonly hollowed out of a single stone. They were generally set high in the wall. It is a mistake to suppose—as it has been supposed—that Saxon windows were generally set in the middle of the thickness of the wall, and splayed both ways. The glass is almost always on the outside, and the splay wholly within."

I avail myself of this opportunity of mentioning that Saxon windows, with pierced slabs, closely similar to those at Jarrow, exist in the tower of St. Benedict's, Cambridge, and in both the nave and tower of the church at Stow, in the County of Lincoln.