

The pre-Reformation Painted Glass in St. Andrew's Church, Norwich.

COMMUNICATED BY
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The recent removal of the old glass from the north and south clerestory windows in the chancel of St. Andrew's Church and its replacement in the three central windows in the north aisle, affords an excellent opportunity for studying certain phases of the art of glass painting as practised in the latter part of the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth centuries. Unfortunately, much of the glass is mere patchwork of odds and ends of quite modern material, harmonising, nevertheless, fairly well with the earlier work, and what still remains of the glass associated with the rebuilding of the church is of great interest and value.

When reading a paper on "Painted Glass," before members of the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society, on April 4th, 1850, Mr. Harrod drew attention to the ancient glass then remaining in the east window of St. Andrew's Church. He gave no detailed account of what was then in existence, but stated briefly, that of the five openings in the window, the two outside ones alone retained any considerable portion of the original glass. In the first and left-hand opening he said that

there was a picture of Abraham about to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice, but the lower part of the picture was gone, and that in the last and right-hand opening there was a picture of Moses and the Brazen Serpent, the lower part of which had also disappeared. He further said, that in the centre opening there was a small and curious picture, evidently from some other window, and one of a series—"A Dance of Death." Fifteen years after the reading of this paper the whole of the glass then in the east window was removed in order that a worthy memorial in stained glass might be inserted to the memory of a parishioner, a benefactor to the church and to the poor. The removal of the old glass was, without doubt, a task needing the greatest skill and care; being thin, probably much of it was broken before the displacement. However, it was removed, and evidently by careful hands. For eight or ten years it remained in the custody of the churchwardens, packed in boxes in the church, when it was again brought to light and each section traced with care. At a later period this glass was taken to pieces and reglazed to fit the two clerestory windows, to which reference has already been made. Unluckily, disaster attended this well-intentioned proceeding. There was more of the old and valuable glass than was needed, and the selection seems to have been made by a glazier entirely ignorant of the importance and delicacy of the task he was undertaking. The picture glass was cut down in width and height in order to fit the openings in the clerestory windows. The whole became practically a patchwork, and many pieces of modern glass were inserted, probably with the intention of getting more colour. This has not produced an unpleasing effect, but the loss of so large an amount of the original glass, once in the fine east window in the church of St. Andrew, is deplorable.

For nearly half a century the glass remained in the clerestory of the church, adding to it patches of colour, but without power to tell its own story. Shortly after the settlement of the Rev. G. W. Briggs as vicar of St. Andrew's Church, and upon his suggestion, it was decided to remove the glass to a better position in the nave of the church, and the north aisle was wisely chosen. The glass is now placed in the three central windows, and by this excellent arrangement what remains of the beautiful pictures of pre-Reformation art can be seen to best advantage.

By a stroke of good fortune the tracings of the old glass from the east window, made before its removal for reglazing, still exist, and by their aid it is possible to describe many of the missing portions.

Commencing an examination of the first two panels, we begin with the first window in the north aisle containing the glass, and find in the upper part of the first panel part of the cusped head of a light belonging to a window in the church prior to the rebuilding in 1480. This is the only piece of glass of that period, and therefore of much interest. It consists of a demi-angel with extended wings, holding a scroll, upon which are the words, "Salua Nos." The angel wears a small cape of ermine and a simple coronet. Above is a portion of the foliated ornament that formed the border round the window. The background is blue, and the date would be about 1450. In this panel are coats of arms and merchants' marks, as also in the next panel, which is entirely of patchwork. These coats and merchants' marks will be described later. This panel contains two heads in a circle, which were originally in the picture of "Moses and the Brazen Serpent."

The first panel in the next window contains a large part of the picture, "Abraham about to sacrifice his son

Isaac." The top of the picture is gone, however, and also some of the lower portion. In the foreground on the right hand is the major part of a house. It is of a low-toned flesh-red, the gable is "corbie-stepped," the windows are square mullioned, and over the crocketed arched doorway is a figure of St. Michael. The design and construction show the influence of Flemish art. Beside the house are trees of blue and green tints. On higher ground, Isaac, in a red tunic and blue hose, bearing a bundle of sticks on his shoulder, follows his father. Blomefield took this incident as representing the stoning of the man who gathered sticks on the Lord's day. Abraham is habited in a white robe, a tunic of warm slate colour, and a small cape of deep blue covering his shoulders; he wears a maroon-coloured cap, and in his left hand carries fire for the altar, and in his right a sword. Along the hem of his robe is worked, in late Gothic letters, the words "Ave gratia plena." In the upper portion of the picture Isaac is kneeling on an altar slab raised a few inches from the ground; to the left hand, the ram caught in a thicket is just visible; the shading colour has largely disappeared. Above this point a portion of Abraham's robe and leg are visible. On the hem of the garment is the shortened word "Abraha"; possibly, there was a continuation on to the next fold of the words "amicus Dei," but the enamel is very much destroyed. An examination of the tracings already mentioned tells us that Abraham was depicted kneeling beside the altar, wielding in his hand a long sword, which the angel of the Lord with outstretched wings clasps with both hands. The picture seems to have ended at the chord line of the window.

The second panel is largely made up of fragments, but it also contains an important portion, considerably less than half, of the glass formerly in the fifth and



THE DANCE OF DEATH.



ABRAHAM ABOUT TO SACRIFICE HIS SON.



MOSES PROCLAIMING TO THE ISRAELITES THE
TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.
THE LIFTING UP OF THE BRAZEN SERPENT
IN THE WILDERNESS.

last opening in the east window. What remains shows that the picture represented two subjects, "Moses proclaiming to the Israelites the Ten Commandments of God" and "Lifting up of the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness." The lower portion shows a crowd of assembled Israelites, seemingly well dressed and important persons; and to the right hand stands Moses, now headless, holding the Tablets of Stone, his right hand uplifted as he addresses the multitude. On the tablets are written the words, in the same interesting type as those of the other inscription, "Tabula Mandatorum Dei." His dress is dark blue and purple, the cloak green and diapered, the upper portion covered by a cape of ermine. Originally this section was in the centre of the picture. In the foreground a number of Israelities were depicted as writhing in agony and bitten by numerous serpents, wingless, flying, scaly creatures, blue and white and yellow, with long ears and hair. Next came Moses with the tables, and above this, "The lifting up of the Serpent," a portion of which still exists. Issuing from a mound stood the forked trunk of a tree, upon which was entwined a blue serpent. The background was white glass slightly matted, with vertical lines representing clouds. On either side were leafless branches of trees, around which small birds were flying. These were drawn in black enamel. On either side of the mound and amidst the trees were towers and spires of churches, blue or white, and below these, green foliage. The whole effect was very good, and bears a striking resemblance to the background of a "charge to St. Peter" in the Church of St. Vincent, Rouen, the date of which is about 1525.

Not a fragment remains by which a clue can be obtained to what picture or pictures filled the three central openings of the east window. It is, however, most likely that the Crucifixion of our Lord was represented, for the subjects

selected for the side openings (the glass which so fortunately still remains) are recognised types of our Lord's Crucifixion. Again, the tracings show that the beautiful tracery of this fine window was also filled with painted glass. In the six openings above the heads of the three central lights were figures of angels holding emblems of the Passion, five of which are noted as respectively carrying a falchion, pillar, cross, reed, and spear.

Further, some old glass of this period, and illustrating the same subjects, still remains in the east window of St. Stephen's Church, Norwich, and a comparison of the two is interesting and useful. The date of that in St. Stephen is 1533, the pictures being on a smaller scale, as the width of the openings is narrower. The subjects are identical, they are similar in plan and in scheme of colour. The shading of the drapery is heavier than that in the St. Andrew's glass, and this is also particularly noticeable in the faces and hands. If they are not by the same hand, which seems most likely, they are from the same workshop. Luckily, it is the lower parts of the pictures, those now lacking in St. Andrew's glass, that remain, and though in a fragmentary condition they are sufficiently perfect to show what the commencement of the story was in each case. On the left side of the window was pictured "Abraham about to sacrifice his son Isaac." The two young men and the ass of the Genesis story are shown in garments of ruby, blue, purple, dark green, and white, attendant on a horse laden with fruit or food of some kind on one side, and on the other with a barrel of water. On the right side of the picture are the remains of a mansion or part of a town, but the fragments are confused. To the left, Isaac is climbing the hill with a bundle of wood on his shoulder, following Abraham, the lower part of whose body only remains. In the opening to

the extreme right, there are remains of the picture illustrating the "Lifting up of the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness." Here we have an almost exact reproduction of the same subject in the St. Andrew's window. The fragments occupy only a small section, but we see heads and portions of the bodies of Israelites, tortured by the fiery, flying serpents, who are of a grey-green colour, not blue-green as in St. Andrew's glass. In the second and fourth openings, we get almost positive evidence as to the subject filling the central lights in St. Andrew's window. In the above openings are the remains of a "Crucifixion." The centre portion representing our Lord on the Cross is, unhappily, entirely gone. In the opening to the left, in the upper portion, is seen the lower part of a cross, and around it are the heads of helmeted soldiers and portions of mounted men and parts of horses and spectators. The full figure of a man in green and purple is in the foreground and evidently gazing upward to the great central figure of our Lord. In the right-hand opening are similar figures, one carrying a ladder, another handing money to another man, an unusual incident in the treatment of this sacred subject.

Returning to St. Andrew's glass, there were also five demi-figures from the smaller openings issuing from clouds and playing upon the viol, pipe and tabor, pipe, lute, and harp. Two of the smaller side openings most fortunately were intact and contained the Royal badges of the crowned Tudor rose and pomegranate, the latter the badge of Catherine of Aragon, thus giving a clue to the date of the glass as between 1509 and 1522. In his *Illustrations of Norfolk and Norwich Antiquities*, Mr. C. J. W. Winter gives an illustration of the glass in the head of the "Abraham and Isaac" picture in the east window, the cusped portion above

the chord line. The drawing shows a kneeling angel holding a shield bearing the arms of Goldwell, Azure, a chief or, over all a lion rampant argent billetty sable, the whole diapered. On either side are two gold wells, the Bishop's rebus. Blomefield says that he was a considerable benefactor to the church, and that the principals of the roof were decorated with his arms. Bishop Goldwell died in 1498-9. Was this memorial placed in the east window after his death, and was there another coat in a similar position in the head of the last light? A tracing of the glass shows the treatment in the painting of the coat to be remarkably like that of the Cardinal Wolsey glass in the Deanery.

Among the tracings are fragments of black letter inscriptions in Latin, which the Rev. W. Busby, of St. John Maddermarket, has very kindly turned into English. A reference to the sacrifice of Isaac runs—"Do not sacrifice him, and lay not thine hand upon the lad (said God)." And in connection with the Lifting up of the Serpent in the Wilderness—"It is read in the xx. Chap. of Numbers, that when the Lord would deliver the people from the serpents who had bitten them (he commanded Moses) to make a serpent and whoever looked upon it (was healed)."

As to the design and quality of the glass. The figures are well drawn and on a scale adapted to a window such as that in St. Andrew's Church, but there is not the refinement and delicacy of treatment that one finds in work of the preceding period. The evidence of Flemish workmanship is very strong, nor is it surprising, for artists from Flanders had for some time settled in England, and at Winchester, Cambridge, Westminster, and Basingstoke, for example, very beautiful work was being and had been produced by Flemings and their pupils. There must have been, at the period of the

production of this window, many artists, natives of Norwich and the Eastern Counties, within the Flemish sphere of influence, who caught the style of this period of the Renaissance. Unfortunately, practically nothing remains of the glass of this period in Norwich. The glass used was mainly white, which would stain well, and the shading colour was produced by a warm grey enamel, which in most cases has not stood the test of time, and the St. Andrew's glass is an example of this defect. The coloured glass (pot-metal) was rich, but not brilliant, the range of colours simple and good, mainly ruby, purple—warm or inclined to slate colour,—blue in two or three tints, greens, yellow, and marone. Some enamel was used, warm-brown, or flesh-red, or a mixture of both. Unlike the treatment in the earlier painted glass, the costumes of the persons represented—apart from saints—are not those of the period, but imitations of classic costumes of a Roman type. This is very noticeable in the present glass, and there is a small panel in Hevingham Church, showing the Spies bearing away the bunch of grapes from Eschol, in which the treatment is the same and almost identical with work on a larger scale in the chapel of the Holy Ghost, Basingstoke.

The first panel in the third window contains glass of the greatest interest and importance, from the rarity of the subject represented—"Death and the Bishop,"—and, providentially, it is in a fairly good condition. Death, a weird skeleton partially clothed in a winding sheet, seizes his victim with his bony left hand, the Bishop turning away his head at so gruesome a sight. Habited in an albe and purple dalmatic with green fringe, a blue chasuble with a pall-shaped orphrey, the Bishop holds in his left hand a pastoral staff. The white gloves are embroidered with gold, and he is wearing on the thumb

of his right hand a signet ring, and rings on three fingers. At the centre point of the orphrey is what appears to be a small shield, bearing in heraldic terms, "Argent, a pale sable." The orphrey is yellow and diapered, the border to the chasuble is also yellow with a scratched-out ornament on it. The floor is chequered, black and white, and a ruby-coloured curtain diapered forms the background. Not being aware of any old glass in England representing the "Dance of Death," nor any reference to the subject in Mr. N. H. J. Westlake's valuable and informing volumes on the *History of Design in Painted Glass*, a photograph of the picture was sent to him, with a request that he would give his opinion upon it. In his very kind reply he says:—"I do not know of the 'Dance of Death' in glass in England, in fresco (tempera) it was common enough here. The example you send is most interesting, and probably an importation. If I can find that there are any fragments existing I will write you. Otton gives in his work two Swiss panels—scenes from 'Le Mort'—and I should suggest that yours is also from Switzerland." In a work by Mr. Francis Douce, F.S.A., in 1858, entitled *Holbein's Dance of Death*, the author states that "a very early allusion to the 'Dance of Death' occurs in a Latin poem that seems to have been composed in the twelfth century by our celebrated countryman, Walter Mapes, who was chaplain to Henry II. until about 1190, and archdeacon of Oxford, 1196." Mr. Douce suggests that it would not be unreasonable to infer that paintings of the "Macaber Dance," or "Dance of Death," were coeval with the archdeacon. Paintings of this subject are known to have existed in old St. Paul's. The antiquary, Stowe, says that there was "a great cloister on the north side of the church, called Pardon Churchyard, and in this cloister was painted, in tempera, the 'Dance of Death.'" Further,

he records that "on the 10th of April, 1549, the cloister of St. Paul's, with its paintings costly and cunningly wrought, were all begun to be pulled down." The spoliation was made by the Protector Somerset, in order to obtain material for building his palace in the Strand.

There were formerly paintings illustrating this subject in Salisbury Cathedral, the church at Stratford-upon-Avon, at Hexham Church, at many other churches, and at the archiepiscopal palace at Croydon. Mr. Douce says that at the time of publishing his book he had in his possession two panels of glass with a portion of a "Dance of Death": one, three Deaths that appear to have been placed at the beginning of the Dance. Over them, in characters of the time of Henry VII., these lines:

" — every man to be contented w^t his chaunce,

And when it shall please God, to follow my daunce."

The other, Death and the Pope. No verses. Size, upright, 8½ ins. by 7 ins.

In the same work is given a fine series of pictures on this subject, by Hans Holbein, while in England, and executed by him in 1538 and later.

The date of the picture in St. Andrew's Church would appear to be about 1460, and, one would suggest, of French workmanship.

SHIELDS IN THE PANELS.

In the first panel at the west end, glazed in with other fragments, are shields bearing the following coats:—

See of Canterbury.—Azure, an episcopal staff in pale argent, ensigned with a cross pattée or, surmounted by a pall of the second, charged with four crosses pattée fitchée, sable.

A Merchant's Mark.—This is the mark of Nicholas Colich, Mayor in 1497. Ewing says that he was buried in the church in 1502, and gave fifty marks towards the

rebuilding. He also gave a holy-water stoup of silver and forty shillings to be put into Cambridge's chest.

Arms of the Grocers' Livery Company.—Argent, a chevron gules between nine cloves, six in chief and three in base, sable. This important company was founded Edward III., 1345, and the arms of the company, with crest and supporters, were granted by Henry VIII. in 1531-2, some thirty years after the death of Nicholas Colich.

There are several of these coats of the Grocers' Company glazed in with other fragments.

In the next panel is a shield of the arms of St. Michael, Gules, a cross flory argent.

In the last panel of all are two shields: one, Gules, a saltire vert, for St. Andrew; the other, the emblem of St. Catherine, Gules, a catherine wheel in base or, pierced with a sword in pale argent, hilted and pommelled of the second. This shield is somewhat larger than the others.