

## THE MEDIEVAL STAINED GLASS WINDOWS AT UPPER HARDRES.

BY N. E. TOKE.

It is noticeable that those churches of Kent which contain the finest remains of medieval stained glass are situated neither in the towns, nor in the more important villages, but in sparsely inhabited country parishes which lie, for the most part, away from the main roads.

Several reasons may be assigned for this fact. When Queen Elizabeth, at the beginning of her reign, prescribed the removal and destruction of " pictures, paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry, and superstition ", stained glass windows were frequently allowed to remain more or less intact because the re-glazing would have entailed too great an expense. The glass containing figures was therefore, in all probability, retained longer in the poorer than in the richer parishes. The same question of expense may also have restrained the destroying hands of the iconoclasts in the seventeenth century. Ultra-puritanical persons might have desired the destruction of the images in glass which offended their eyes every Sabbath day, but the parishioners hesitated to incur the cost of their removal. It is also not unlikely that the smaller villages were less puritanically inclined than the larger centres of population, and that the majority of their inhabitants, as well as the squires who were, in many cases, descendants of the donors of the windows, resented any attempt to destroy the ancient glass.

An instance of this opposition by a squire occurred at Cranbrook, which was a large and important village in the sixteenth century. Walter Roberts, son and heir of John Roberts, Esq., of Glassenbury, who died in 1460, had inserted in the east window of the chancel a painting of his father, in armour, kneeling before a desk on which lay a

book inscribed with a prayer for the souls of the deceased, his wife, and the donor Walter and his three wives. This painted glass remained intact for twenty-four years after the order of 1559 prescribing the destruction of inscriptions savouring of Romish doctrine, although the churchwardens were summoned more than once to remove it. The opposition came from another Walter Roberts of Glassenbury, who resented the removal of his ancestral glass. Walter Roberts died in 1580, and his son and heir, Thomas, who, in 1582, married a lady who was strongly attached to the doctrines of the Reformation, seems then to have withdrawn the opposition of the family, for the glass was destroyed in 1583, when a glazier was paid "for mending of the windows of the church, and taking down of pictures in the said windows, 15s. 4d."

The destruction of stained glass which took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was continued in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, when the restoration of churches was accompanied by a desire for more light, and consequently by a preference for clear glass. It is much to be regretted that few of the restorers were of the opinion of the Rev. Philip Parsons, who remarks in his *Monuments and Stained Glass in One Hundred Churches* (published in 1794):—"I confess I am delighted with this beautiful ornament [painted glass] in whatsoever place I meet with it, but more especially in our churches where I think that windows

‘ With painted stories richly dight  
Casting a dim religious light ’,

are infinitely superior to the glaring glass of our modern churches, and much more suitable to a place of devotion. . . . It is therefore with regret and some kind of indignation that I see these beautiful and venerable memorials too often shamefully neglected and broken in churches, as well as very frequently falling to pieces and unregarded in the halls and kitchens of farmhouses, where once they were the honest pride and pleasure of our ancestors."

Fortunately public opinion has changed and every effort is made now-a-days to preserve the few fragments which remain to us of the splendid glass which once filled our churches. It is, however, unfortunate that these remains are, in many cases, difficult of access, and that they are, in consequence, seldom visited. This has been the case with the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Upper Hardres, which contains some of the oldest and finest medieval glass in Kent, but which was almost unknown, except to archæologists, until omnibuses started running, via Stone Street, between Canterbury and Folkestone.

The Perpendicular west window of the church is filled with a medley of grisaille and quarries of various dates in which are inserted three beautiful medallions of the early part of the thirteenth century. They can be inspected and studied with ease at close quarters by means of the ancient wooden gallery which runs along the west end of the church immediately against the window.

The northernmost (Plate I) of the three medallions illustrates the well-known legend of St. Nicholas and the three poor maidens. The story goes that in the city, where the saint lived, a nobleman was reduced to abject poverty, and contemplated abandoning his three daughters to a life of shame as the only means of saving them from starvation. Nicholas, hearing of this, went secretly to his house three nights in succession, and at each visit cast through the window a bag of gold which formed a dowry for each girl, and enabled her to marry happily. In the medallion St. Nicholas, wearing a mitre and holding his crozier in his left hand, is shown handing the gold through the window to one of the maidens, who is looking at it with astonishment. Behind her stand her sisters, and the father, on the left, is depicted kneeling and gazing in thankfulness at his benefactor.

The main portion of the Saint's vestment is dark green with a crimson amice round the neck. His feet are light blue in colour. The father wears a light blue garment with a red upper part. The shoulder and arm of the girl receiving

the gold are dark green. The background of the picture is dark blue on the left and light blue on the right behind the saint. The base of the building between the figures is light green, and the space between the two portions of window is crimson. The design above the crossbar is light green, and the portion between the maidens and the saint dark red. The triangular coping at the top is light blue.

The centre medallion (Plate II), shows St. Nicholas standing facing the spectator. He holds in his left hand a crozier, and his right hand is uplifted in blessing. The upper part of his vestment is dark red, the middle dark green, and lower part white. The lettering on the band across the centre of the medallion reads N.TER. FI to the left of the figure, and LAVS to the right. The inscription may stand for NICOLAO TER FIDO LAUS,<sup>1</sup> in allusion to the three benefits conferred by the saint. The background of the painting is a beautiful deep blue. The medallion is surrounded by a narrow white band with brown markings, surrounded in its turn by a band of crimson.

Until 1926 two figures (saints ?), each holding a staff, or crozier, stood above the medallion, but they, as well as much of the surrounding glass, were broken to pieces by a storm of wind and hail in that year. Fortunately the three priceless medallions were unhurt, and the broken quarries have been skilfully releaded into the window by Mr. G. Browning.

The signification of the southernmost medallion (Plate III) has puzzled iconographers. The Virgin Mary is here represented, crowned and seated. She holds in her right hand a sceptre formed of a three-branched lily, and her left arm encircles the Divine Child, who is sitting on her lap, and gazing up into the face of His mother. On the right hand of the Virgin is a youth, and on her left a bearded man, both kneeling in adoration. In the circular band round the painting the word SALAMONI is written against the head of the youth, and PHILIPPI against that of the man.

<sup>1</sup> A classical scholar has suggested that this abbreviated inscription may represent: NICOLAO TER FIAT LAUS.



ST. NICHOLAS AND THE THREE MAIDENS.

PLATE I.



ST. NICHOLAS.



THE VIRGIN ENTHRONED.

PLATE III.

It has been suggested that the picture represents the Adoration of the Shepherds, and this may possibly be the case although it is not usual, in mediæval paintings of the Nativity, to represent the Shepherds without crooks and only two in number, nor to depict the Virgin with a crown and sceptre.<sup>1</sup> A still stronger objection is that the Saviour is represented here as a full-grown child, and not as a newborn babe.

Paintings showing the Virgin with crown and sceptre, and holding the Child Jesus on her lap, and with a kneeling Saint on either side of her are common in both mediæval and renaissance art, and it is possible that the kneeling figures in this medallion may represent saints, although they have no nimbus. But it is most probable that the names on either side refer to them, and I know of no saint named Solomon, especially in conjunction with Philip. It is noticeable that the first word is in the dative and the second in the genitive, the inference being that the medallion was dedicated to Solomon, the son of Philip (*Salamoni Philipi*), the youthful figure representing the son, and the bearded figure the father.

The Philip in question may possibly be Philip de Hardres, who was one of the " *Recognitores Magnae Assisae* " in the reign of King John, or his grandson Philip who, we find from a deed in the Surrenden Library, was a man of great eminence under Henry III and a great benefactor to the Priory of Christ Church from which, I think, the medallions were taken as they bear a striking resemblance to medallions of the same date in the Cathedral. Two sixteenth century quarries of enamel glass beneath the centre medallion tend to confirm this supposition. That on the left shows, in yellow stain, the rebus of the Goldwell family, viz. : a gold well—which is here surmounted by what appears to be a heraldic rose. That on the right is less worn and shows a gold well with the letter *U* on one side and *G* on the other,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Councer has called my attention to an early representation of the Nativity in one of the windows of York Minister in which the Virgin is crowned and holds a sceptre.

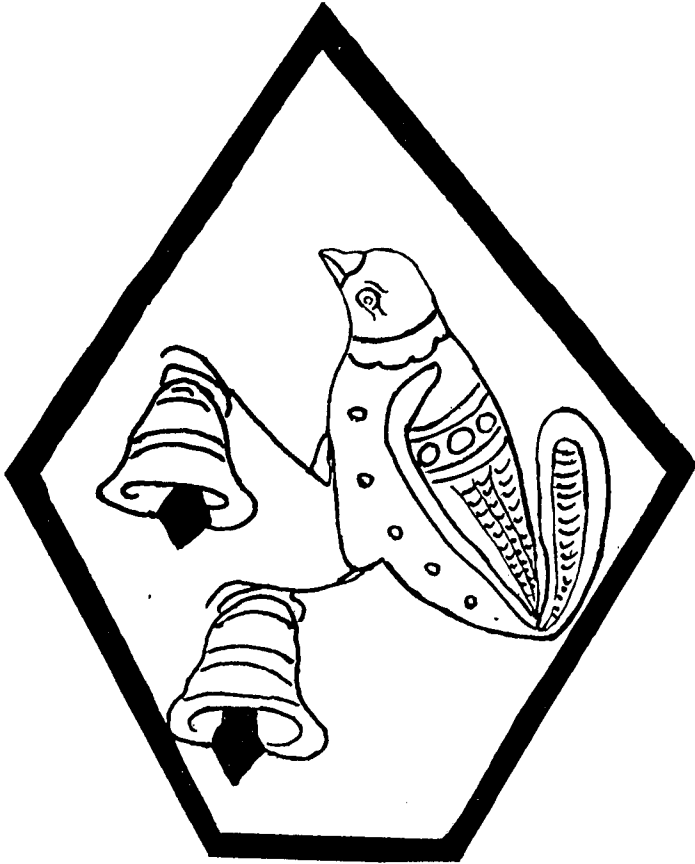


and the intertwined letters P<sup>I</sup>R (for Prior) above.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that this quarry stands for Thomas Goldwell, the last Prior of Christ Church, who was pensioned off by Henry VIII at the dissolution of the Monastery in 1540. It is therefore probable that the three medallions and the surrounding painted glass came from one of the destroyed buildings of the Monastery, and they may have been given, or sold, to Thomas Hardres, who accompanied Henry VIII to the Siege of Boulogne in 1544, and to whom the King presented a dagger and the gates of that city in acknowledgement of his distinguished bravery on that occasion. On his return from the siege Henry paid a visit to Hardres Court where the gates of Boulogne were erected in the wall of the garden, and where they remained until their foolish destruction in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> If the medallions had been presented originally by the Hardres family to Christ Church it is not unlikely that Thomas Hardres may have asked the King for permission to place them in the church adjoining his manor house.

If the Solomon to whom the medallion was dedicated were not a member of the Hardres family—and it must be admitted that the name does not occur in any of the extant pedigrees of that family—he may be Solomon, the Sub-Prior of Christ Church, who was one of the monks of Canterbury exiled by King John in 1207. But his father's name is not known, and the youthfulness of the figure in the medallion rather militates against this theory, since the Sub-Prior would be, presumably, a man of mature age. Unless therefore further information should come to light, I fear the identification of the figures must remain an insolvable puzzle. All we know is that the medallions were in the church in 1794 when Philip Parsons noted "in a narrow window . . . three elegant circles, one of which appears to represent the Holy Family."

<sup>1</sup> A precisely similar quarry, though defective, can be seen in one of the South windows of St. Alphege's, Canterbury.

<sup>2</sup> There is an interesting account of the Hardres family and of these gates in *Arch. Cant.*, IV.



BIRD WITH HANDBELLS.

PLATE IV.

Among the fourteenth century grisaille should be noticed, under the centre medallion, two charming quarries of the fifteenth century—the one showing an amusing bird ringing handbells (Plate IV), and the other a flower resembling a polyanthus. Above the same medallion is a circle containing a *rose-en-soleil*, yellow on white, the well-known badge adopted by Edward IV after 1461. This piece of glass was, prior to the storm of 1926, in the circular top of the window, and was brought down close to the medallion to fill the gap left by the destruction of the glass beneath.

At the top of the northern light is another circle containing *sable, an estoile of many points, or*, and in the bar tracery above this a much worn sixteenth century quarry showing, in yellow stain, a saltire between four martlets, the arms, perhaps, of the well-known Kentish family of Guldeford<sup>1</sup> which bore *or, a saltire between four martlets, sable*.

Immediately below the medallion in this light is a shield with an indecipherable device surmounted by a fragmentary inscription which appears to be "Quin si". Within the Q can be seen a human face.

A similar shield beneath the southern medallion shows six lioncels in brown pigment on white glass. This bearing is probably meant for *Argent, six lioncels sable*, the arms of Savage of Bobbing. Sir Roger Savage, whose name occurs among those of the Kentish Knights in the "Parliamentary Roll" (temp. Edward I) bore these arms, as did also Sir Ernaud Savage, who was at the second Dunstable Tournament in 1334, and Sir Arnold Savage, who was Sheriff of Kent in the fourth and ninth years of Richard II, Speaker of the House of Commons in the second year of Henry IV, and Privy Councillor. His shield of arms is amongst those carved in the cloisters of Canterbury Cathedral.<sup>2</sup> There the lioncels are arranged three, two, and one, and not three and three, as at Hardres, but the latter arrangement was also employed by members of the family,

<sup>1</sup> There is an account of this family by Canon Jenkins in *Arch. Cant.*, XIV, 1-17.

<sup>2</sup> It was also at one time in one of the windows of the Chapter House.

for Hasted says that a coat of arms, with an inscription to William Savage, was formerly in one of the windows of Milton Church, near Sittingbourne,<sup>1</sup> in which the lions were borne three and three. This arrangement is facilitated at Hardres by the rounding of the base of the shield, an innovation which came into heraldic use at the beginning of the fifteenth century. I think, therefore, I am justified in ascribing this shield to Sir Arnold Savage, and thus establishing another link in the chain of evidence connecting this glass with the Priory of Christ Church.

Though the provenance of the glass in the west window cannot be determined, it is certain that the beautiful fourteenth century glass in the two lancets in the east window of the chancel came originally from Stelling Church. In the first two editions of Hasted's *History of Kent* (published in 1790 and 1800 respectively) the author, speaking of Upper Hardres, remarks: "In several of the windows are remains of painted glass but all much defaced", but in the appendix to volume X of the second edition he adds to this sentence "of what was originally in this church, but the handsome painted glass, mentioned in vol. 8, p. 94 as being in Stelling Church, has since been removed, and placed in the several windows of this church and chancel."

Volume VIII of Hasted's second edition was published in 1799, but the glass appears to have been removed from Stelling before this date, for Philip Parsons, whose book was, as I have already mentioned, published in 1794, thus describes what he saw at Hardres: "Over the altar are two long narrow windows full of painted glass. . . . In one (1) A female figure kneeling, (2) A king with an arrow in one hand and an ark in the other, under him—*St. Edmond*, (3) Two female figures, seemingly Mary and Elizabeth, (4) The arms of Hardress [*sic*].

In the other window :—(1) A beautiful female, kneeling, (2) a bishop with mitre and crozier, (3) a female conversing with two smaller figures, (4) the arms of Hardres 'debruised with a chevron gules.' . . .

<sup>1</sup> *History of Kent*, 2nd edition (1798), Vol. VI., p. 186.

I have lately been told that the windows over the altar were greatly composed of the glass from Stelling, but they do not appear to so much advantage here as there."

In his description of the glass in the latter church, Parsons says:—

"As soon as you enter the church door, on the right hand [i.e. in the south aisle] is a window nearly filled with admirable paintings, the colours strong and glowing. . . . The window is about twelve feet high and eight feet wide. There are three divisions in the height to the place where the arch begins; the middle division is separated in two parts; the uppermost contains a representation of the Virgin and Child . . . the lower part of this division has been broken and supplied with common glass. Each of the other two divisions are parted into four large panels containing the following paintings:—On the right side, at the top—(1) A neat female figure. (2) A crowned figure—a king, a sceptre in one hand and a model of a church in the other. (3) An elegant female figure. (4) An escutcheon, 'Azure, semée of cross crosslets, a lion rampant, ermine, debruised with a fess gules'.

On the left side, at the top:—(1) A female figure kneeling, most beautiful indeed! (2) An archbishop with his mitre, pall and crozier. (3) A female figure presenting the model of a church to a male, very elegant. (4) An escutcheon, 'Gules, a lion rampant, ermine, debruised with a chevron or.'"

Allowing for some slight discrepancies it is clear that, with the exception of the third one in each division, the Stelling panels reappear, in the same order, at Hardres. The two panels at Hardres which, in Parson's description, differ from those at Stelling may have come from another part of the latter church, but I believe that the discrepancy is due to faulty observation, and that all the eight Stelling panels were removed from the same window and brought to Hardres. My reasons for this belief are contained in the following description of the panels in the east window of the chancel of Hardres Church.

At the top of the north lancet is a beautiful representation of the Virgin Mary with her hands uplifted in prayer and kneeling on a green mound. She wears a green mantle over a yellow robe, and a white nimbus encircles her head. The background of the picture is deep red.

The panel below this represents Edmund the Martyr, King of East Anglia, who was defeated and captured by the Danes at Hoxne in Suffolk in the year 870. On his refusal to renounce Christianity they riddled him with arrows and cut off his head. His relics were removed in 903 from Hoxne to Beodricsworth, since called St. Edmundsbury, where the celebrated Abbey arose. The king is depicted, crowned, holding an arrow in his right hand and a book in his left. It will be noticed that Parsons in his account of this panel at Hardres calls the book "an ark", and at Stelling calls the arrow "a sceptre", and the book "a model of a church". The king's robe is green above and brown below, and he stands on a green mound against a dark red background. At the bottom of the panel is inscribed ST. EDMVND. R.

The next panel represents the salutation of Mary and Elizabeth. The left hand figure has a yellow robe and a green nimbus, the right hand one a brown robe and a red nimbus. Parsons describes this scene accurately in his account of the glass at Hardres, but in the corresponding panel at Stelling he mentions "an elegant female figure". I imagine that this is a slip for "two elegant female figures".

The bottom panel contains a shield bearing: *Azure (diapered), semée of cross-crosslets or, a lion rampant ermine, debriused by a fess gules.*

Both Hasted and Parsons noticed this shield at the bottom of the window in the south aisle of Stelling Church, and the latter, as I have already mentioned, ascribes the arms to Hardres. They may be a variant<sup>1</sup> of the arms of this family, viz. *Gules, a lion rampant, ermine, debriused by a chevron or*, but they bear more resemblance to those of Willock:—*Azure, a lion rampant or, debriused by a fess gules.*

<sup>1</sup> Mr. W. S. Walford in an article in *Arch. Cant.*, XXXIX, states that, in the thirteenth century, *semée of cross-crosslets* was not an uncommon mark of cadency for younger sons.



SOUTH LANCET OF THE EAST WINDOW.

PLATE V.

The panel at the top of the south lancet (Plate V) shows St. John wearing a green mantle over a yellow robe and kneeling, with hands uplifted, on a green mound. This figure was taken by Parsons to be that of a female, and he describes it in terms by no means exaggerated, "The female figure . . . is so truly elegant, the form so just, and the face so beautiful, that I cannot but think no painting of the pencil can exceed it."

As the kneeling figures of the Virgin and St. John, at the top of the north and south lancets respectively, are turned towards each other, it is not unlikely that there was at one time, in the centre of the three-light window at Stelling from which they were taken, a representation of Christ on the Cross towards which they were gazing. It is true that Parsons says that the upper portion of this middle light was occupied in his time by a representation of the Madonna and Child, but this might have been originally below a picture of the Crucifixion, and have occupied the space which, he says, was "broken and supplied with common glass".

The panel next below the last contains the figure of Edmund Rich who, in 1232, was appointed by Pope Gregory IX, Archbishop of Canterbury, and consecrated April 2nd, 1234. He came into conflict with Henry III over the control of vacant benefices and other matters, and in 1240 withdrew to France where he died at Soissy in the same year. He is shown here wearing a green chasuble with a white pall, and a brown vestment over a white alb. His right hand is uplifted in blessing, and he holds in the left his archi-episcopal staff. Underneath is inscribed ST. EDMVND. EP. (i.e. EPISCOPUS). The background like that of the panel above is deep crimson.

The following panel shows St. Anne teaching the Virgin to read from an open book. The figures are robed in dark green against a background of crimson, and both the drawing and colouring of the whole panel are extremely artistic and beautiful. I feel sure that this is the panel which Parsons describes at Stelling as "a female figure presenting the model of a church to a male, very elegant." As he mistook St. John



for a woman, and the book in the hand of St. Edmund for an ark at Hardres, and for a model of a church at Stelling, he probably mistook the Virgin for a boy, and the book in the hand of St. Anne for the model of a church. In his account of the window at Stelling he says that this third panel contained "a female conversing with two smaller figures", but the probability is very strong that this panel was the third one in the same series at Stelling, and that Parsons' erroneous description of it on each occasion was due to the dirty condition of the glass when he saw it. He laments in his account of Stelling that "a window so truly beautiful should be lost to the public eye from its situation in this lonely spot, and still more that it should be so neglected as to be in danger of decaying from dust and damp." The panels were very begrimed in 1918 when I went to Hardres to photograph them. I was accompanied by a friend, M. Pierre Turpin of Lille, a glass painter and archaeologist of repute who was then a refugee in England. Being unable to distinguish the figures on one of the panels we obtained a bucket of water and a ladder from the farm beside the church, and carefully cleaned part of the glass. The result so surprised and delighted the Rector, the late Rev. W. A. Newman, that he caused the whole of the glass to be cleaned in the same way, so revealing details and beauties hitherto unsuspected. The glass is now in good condition, and its jewel-like splendour in the morning hours is undimmed by the dust and damp which Parsons so deplored.

The lowest panel contains a shield with the arms of Hardres:—*Gules, a lion rampant ermine, debruised by a chevron or.*<sup>1</sup> Hasted says that the debruising chevron in the arms of Hardres was a token that the family held the Manor by knight service of the Castle of Tonbridge which was the seigniory of the Clares, Earls of Gloucester, whose arms were—*Or, three chevrons gules*, and that the arms of Clare were "within these few years" in the east window of the chancel. The chevron does not appear on all the

<sup>1</sup> Robert de Hardres, according to the Dering Roll (temp. Hen. III) bore, "Ermine a lyon rampant gules, debruised by a chevron or". In the Arundel Roll, the field is argent.

Hardres' monuments in the church. It is shown on the tombstone to Sir Thomas Hardres, Bt., who died in 1688, but not on that to Thomas Hardres (also obt. 1688) the son of Sir Thomas Hardres Kt., the King's Sergeant-at-Law, nor on the brasses to Dorothea Hardres (obt. 1533) and Mabell Hardres (obt. 1579). It appears on most of the hatchments in the church, and is also shown on the Hardres shield in the cloisters of Canterbury Cathedral.

Each shield of arms at the foot of the lancets has, on either side of it, four little octagonal quarries, each containing a beautifully drawn golden flower on a white ground, and a border outside composed of fleur-de-lis and lions passant-guardant or. This portion of the glass is probably of later date than the shields. Some lettering appears under each of the lower panels of which I could distinguish only O.H . . . and MINI on the left side, and on the right MINI again, probably the last two syllables of DOMINI.

The colouring of these two windows is so rich and harmonious, and the drawing of the figures so delicate and artistic, that they rank among the finest specimens of glass-painting in the fourteenth century, and are not exceeded in beauty by any other glass of this century in Kent. Mr. C. R. Counce, to whom my thanks are due for helpful notes on the glass, has made a beautiful coloured drawing of one of the lancet windows, and also of two of the medallions. It is much to be regretted that the question of expense has prevented the reproduction of his drawings in this article which they would have illustrated in a way unattainable by photographs.

My thanks are due also to Canon A. J. Morris, Rector of Upper Hardres, for some notes on the glass in the west window, to Mr. R. E. W. Flower of the British Museum for searching the Hardres' pedigrees, and to Dr. Charles Cotton, O.B.E. for endeavouring to trace Solomon Philipi in the records of the Canterbury Cathedral Library. I have also to thank Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Reade for notes on the west window and for interesting photographs of the glass as it was prior to the storm of 1926.