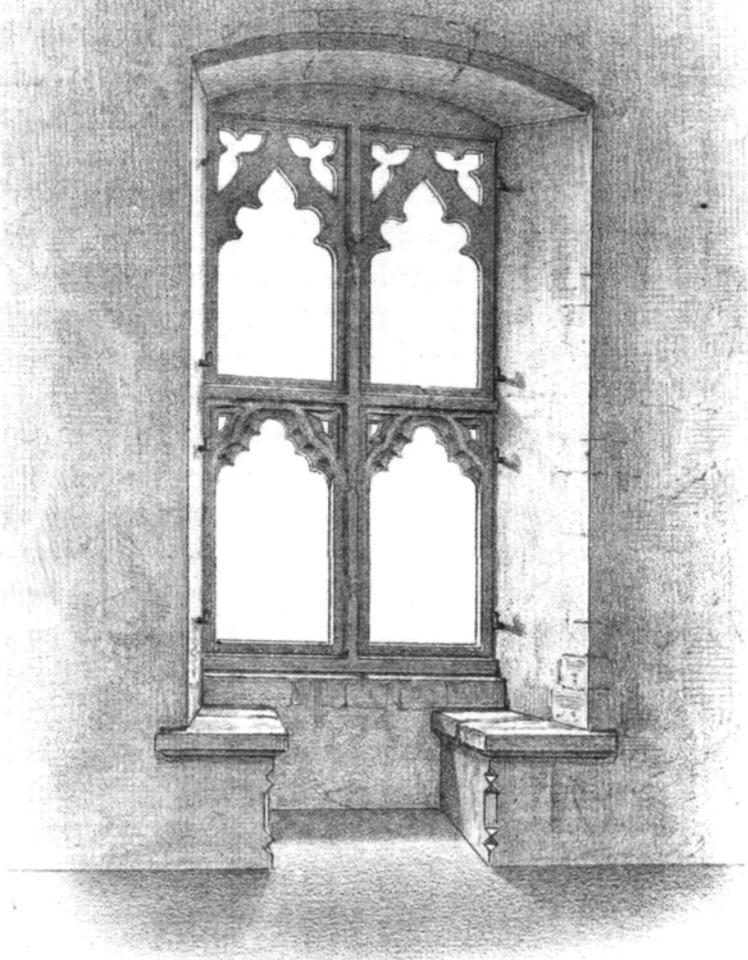


A NOTE ON MEDIÆVAL WINDOW CASEMENTS
AND SHUTTERS.

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THE window from Monks Horton Priory, represented in the annexed engraving, is a good example of the usual difference between domestic and ecclesiastical windows. In churches there is seldom any provision for setting the windows open, and the glass is fixed in a way to ensure its permanence, except in the small openings commonly known as *low side windows*, which appear never to have been glazed, but to have been closed with internal shutters. In domestic buildings, particularly in the principal rooms, the windows are very usually constructed with special preparation for casements, or shutters, which might be readily opened; and the recesses of the windows are carried down to the floor, and provided with seats of masonry at the sides. These peculiarities are well exhibited in our engraving: the hooks for hinges, which remain in the stone work, shew that all the four lights have originally had casements, or shutters, and the mullion and transom are formed with rebates to receive them, while the tracery, instead of reaching



HORTON PRIORY (Fig 6)

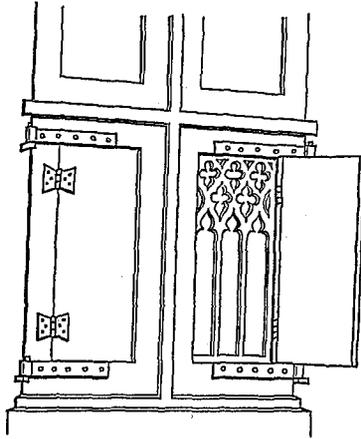
(From a drawing by R. C. Hussey Esq. F. S. A.)

inwards in the usual way, as far as the face of the mullion, extends only to the rebate, so that the shutters or casements, when closed, would fit against it, and would not require to be adjusted to the curves of the stone work. The inner face of the upper tracery is flat, but in the lower lights, where it is at a level to interfere more with the view of any one looking out of the window, the edges are chamfered, apparently to reduce the obstruction.

It is obvious that shutters or casements, hung upon hooks, could be taken down as readily as a farm gate can be unhinged. Hence it is easy to understand the reasonableness of the mediæval custom, of sometimes stowing away the glazing when the occupants of a house removed from it, and also to see why the law should have held (as it did so late as the reign of Henry VII.) that the glass was furniture, and no part of the fabric of a house.

It was not the usual practice to provide casements or shutters for the whole area of a window. Most commonly they were confined to the lower part, and a stone transom was fixed across the window immediately over them, to facilitate their application, and to form a sill to the glazing in the part above. From this cause, transoms are to be found in domestic windows of as early date as the thirteenth century, and are common in those of the fourteenth, long before they came into general use in ecclesiastical buildings. The older shutters were made of upright boarding, but in later times they were often framed in panels, either plain or with tracery on the front. In the latter case the back of the panels was sometimes free from the tracery, and was hinged, so that it could be set open when the shutter was closed, and

the tracery then became an ornamental trellis, as shewn in the accompanying wood-cut.



Occasionally, though very rarely, windows of the ordinary kind in churches are found to have been provided with casements or shutters, and two examples can be referred to in the County of Kent—one is the eastern window on the south side of the chancel at Ryarsh, and the other the western window on the north side of the chancel at Doddington (engraved in ‘Arch. Cantiana,’ ix. 237); in the latter case there has been a shutter, to the lower part only, within the glazing. Two windows in a room over the vestry at Dartford Church have modern shutters in the place of the ancient casements; and the northern window in the upper story of the porch at Steeple Morden, in Cambridgeshire, retains (or did so in 1851) the original oak shutter; but these are to be regarded as domestic, rather than ecclesiastical, examples.