

Henry A. Payne's Stained-Glass Windows

A NOTE ON THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS OF HENRY A. PAYNE.

My interest in the stained-glass work of Mr. Henry Payne was first excited some years ago by seeing examples of the work of his pupils at South Kensington. They were little windows of birds and flowers, little chequered patterns, coats-of-arms, rendered with a delight in colour that made one glad to see work which showed happiness in the doing yet sad to think what small encouragement there is for such work now. Since then I have seen many of his own windows—the seven-light window in St. Agatha's, Birmingham, the five-light windows in Roker Church, Sunderland, and St. Martin's, Kensal Rise, the three-light windows at Madresfield Church and the Hook Church, Upton-on-Severn, the two-light windows in the apsidal end of St. Alban's, Birmingham, and at Norton and Stokesay, and the lancet windows in the Wych Church, Malvern Link, and in Scisset Church, Yorkshire.

I write neither as artist nor as craftsman—simply as one to whom the contrast and combination of translucent, glowing colours appeal more intensely than anything else in art. And in its quality of colour no glass was ever richer or more diversified than that of the best makers to-day. It fails of its effect, however, except in the hands of artists with discrimination and feeling for the whole design of the window. Mr. Payne and a few others whose windows I know—notably Mr. Whall, Mr. Louis Davis, Mr. Reginald Hallward, Mr. Hugh Arnold, Mr. Strachan, Miss Townshend, and Miss Esplin—possess these gifts, and with them new possibilities in the making of windows open out. They are both artists and craftsmen: they not only design but actually supervise every part of the window, choosing each piece of colour, with results very different from what may be called "trade" windows. People will not understand that a window to be a work of art must be the work of an artist. The spirit of the Gothic tradition in glass-painting remains without degenerating into imitation. Canopies rarely appear: if they do they are constructed of intertwining boughs and foliage. Draperies in colour are richer than ever, but less ornate. In their scheme the importance of letting light come through the glass is paramount. No piece of glass is of the same tint throughout, and different thicknesses of the leads and slight deviation in shape of quarries, with a note of colour here and there between them, prevent any thought

128

of mechanical workmanship. On entering a church so lighted one's breath is drawn with a quickening of delight at sight of such glory of colour.

Mr. Payne is fond of illustrating earth and sea and sky and all sorts and conditions of men united in praise. The cartoon of the window in St. Martin's, Kensal Rise, is full of movement and life. In the magnificent window in the south transept of Roker Church, on the text "Come unto me," there is on one side of the figure of Christ an old workman and a kneeling factory girl, clad in the colours of her choice (now harmonised), a dazzling orange-ruby jacket and sea-green hat with brilliant roses in it, which has slipped down on to her back, and on the other, labourers with tool-bags and two children in coral-red and blue. Outside there are a king and queen. The bases of the five lights are of vivid green glass. The colour throughout



DETAILS OF THE ASCENSION WINDOW IN ROKER CHURCH BY HENRY A. PAYNE, A.R.W.S.