

Notes on Morris & Co.'s domestic stained glass

by A. C. Sewter

FROM time to time the firm of Morris & Co made stained glass for private houses. Much of the material was naturally of secular, or at any rate non-Christian subjects. While quite a number of windows of this kind are known, much of the material is difficult to trace and identify, for various reasons. In the first place, the clues to it which are to be found among documentary sources are often exasperatingly vague. Secondly, many of the houses in which it was installed have since been demolished and the glass destroyed, dismantled, moved or sold. And thirdly, the information which we have about individual commissions is often insufficient to permit the conclusive identification of the various panels which occasionally turn up without recorded history. Under these circumstances it is hoped that publication of some notes on Morris' domestic glass may lead to the identification of further examples.

It must be emphasised that the present notes do not aim at completeness. That would be impossible in the space at our disposal. Windows for Oxford and Cambridge colleges and for chapels in schools, colleges, hospitals and universities elsewhere are not included; neither are the well-known sets of Ladies Tending Flowers done for the Green Dining Room of the South Kensington Museum in 1866/67; of Scottish Worthies for the Dundee Council Chambers in 1889; or of the Story of Tristram and Isoude commissioned in 1862 by Walter Dunlop of Harden Grange, Bingley, and now in the Cartwright Memorial Hall, Bradford. Similarly, religious subjects done for chapels in private houses, such as those at Castle Howard, Tabley House, etc., are omitted; but an exception is made for St Cecilia, who for obvious reasons was specially suitable for domestic use. A few religious subjects, included in Marillier's MS notes under the name of a person, are also left out, since it has been found in certain instances that these are in fact church windows.

Perhaps the best way to marshal the mass of data is to deal with

the subjects in groups, which I propose to letter with roman capitals.

A: Viking subjects. This series was first designed by Burne-Jones in 1883/84 for Miss Catharine Wolfe's house, Vinland, Newport, Rhode Island. The seven individual subjects are: Frey, Thor, Odin, Karlsefne, Leif the Lucky, Gudride, and Viking Ship. The cartoons are in the Birmingham City Art Gallery (408/410'27 and 1134/1136'30), and six of them are reproduced in Malcolm Bell, *Burne-Jones, a Record and Review*, 1894, opposite p. 68. The Vinland window was removed in 1934 and was bought in 1937 by Cohen Brothers of Baltimore. One panel from it, Leif the Lucky, is now in the possession of Mr Otis Beall Kent of Rockville, Maryland. The others are untraced.

This set apparently supplemented a series of 10 Planets, also designed by Burne-Jones, in 1878. According to Marillier these were made for 'Woodlands', but I have come across no clue as to where this might have been. The subjects were: Venus, Luna, Morning Star, Evening Star, Saturn, Mars, Earth, Sol, Jupiter, and Apollo. No complete set of these is known. Several partial repetitions of these two sets were made:

1: The first, of 1885, forms part of a window in the hall at Thornbridge Hall, near Great Longstone, Derbyshire, and was done for a Mr Marples. The house is now a teacher training college run by the City of Sheffield Education Committee. The window is intact. The relevant subjects are: Luna, Earth, Morning Star, and Evening Star.

2: In 1896 a circular window with the Evening Star was made for Mr Howgate of 22 Park Row, Leeds. I have no information as to what happened to this.

3: In 1901 a series of windows was supplied to W. E. Cooper of Hume Towers, Branksome Wood Road, Bournemouth, which included the following: Morning Star, Evening Star, Sol, Luna, Mars, Venus, and Jupiter. All of these were destroyed in the last war.

4: Also in 1901 three of the same set were supplied to the Exchange, Adelaide, viz: Morning Star, Evening Star, and Sol. I have no further information about these.

5: In 1903 a window was made for James Wilcock, JP, of Wilmar Lodge, Pleasington near Blackburn, comprising the following subjects: Luna, Earth, Sol, Thor, Odin, and Frey. This window was acquired by Mr Henry Whittaker and presented in 1958 to the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Blackburn. It is now erected on the staircase of the new Holden Science Laboratories.

6: In 1913 a set was supplied to J. A. Roberts of 6 Earls Avenue, Folkestone, consisting of: Sol, Viking Ship, Luna, Thor, Odin, Frey, Karlsefne, Gudride, and Leif the Lucky. This set has disappeared.

B: A series of subjects which proved popular for domestic glass,

and which were specially suitable for library windows, were figures of poets. The first series of poets were those designed by Burne-Jones and Madox Brown about 1872/74 for the Combination Room at Peterhouse, Cambridge. They were: Homer, Aeschylus, Horace, Lucretius, Dante, and Chaucer, all of which were by Burne-Jones; and Spenser and Milton, both by Madox Brown. New versions of the first three on a larger scale were designed by Burne-Jones in 1892 for the Bute Hall at Glasgow University, when Shakespeare and a fresh Milton were added from designs by J. H. Dearle.

Windows made from these sets for private patrons included the following:

1: In 1873, for Sir William Armstrong, the Peterhouse Dante and Chaucer, Spenser, Homer and Aeschylus, together with newly designed figures of Milton by Ford Madox Brown, and Virgil and Horace by Burne-Jones. These were placed in the top lights of the library bay window at 'Crag-side', Rothbury, Northumberland, where they still are. The 'Crag-side' Milton represents the poet old and blind, whereas at Peterhouse he is shown young.

2: Also in 1873, a Dante for 'Mr Gardiner'. No further information.

3: In 1875, Homer and Aeschylus, Virgil and Horace (in pairs), with the addition of a Poetry specially designed by Burne-Jones, were made for Joldwynds, the house built by Philip Webb in 1873 for Sir William Bowman, Bt. It was near Dorking. The house was demolished about 1925. The panels of Homer and Aeschylus at the Victoria and Albert Museum might conceivably have come from Joldwynds, but the balance of probability is otherwise; and there is no evidence known to me to indicate what became of the others.

4: Probably about 1876, for Sidmouth Manor, Devon: Homer and Aeschylus, Horace and Lucretius, Chaucer and Dante (again apparently in pairs), and another poet, writing. These formed part of a scheme along with other subjects which will be mentioned below. The windows were subsequently dismantled and sold separately. Again it is possible that the three poets at the Victoria and Albert Museum may have come from Sidmouth; but as they are not in pairs this is unlikely. I have no evidence of their present whereabouts.

5: In 1888 Dante and Chaucer (probably in a single panel) were supplied to Mackmurdo and Horne, presumably for a client. No further information.

6: Undated, but probably in the 1870's, Horace and Milton, both as at 'Crag-side', and now in the library windows at Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton. They are set on quarry grounds, with scrolls above their heads.

7: 1901, for Hume Towers, Bournemouth (see paragraph A. 3, above): Homer, Aeschylus, Virgil, Horace, Dante, and Chaucer. The first three only survive.

c: Another set of designs with poetic associations was the series of Chaucer's Good Women designed by Burne-Jones in 1864/65. These appear to have been commissioned originally either for Peterhouse or for Birket Foster's house, The Hill, Witley, Surrey.

There were seven subjects, *viz*: Amor and Alcestis, Thisbe and Philomela, Phyllis and Hypermnestra, Medea and Hypsiphile, Dido and Cleopatra, Ariadne and Lucretia, and finally Chaucer himself, lying asleep on the ground.

The Peterhouse set is still there, in the Combination Room. Birket Foster's set has been lost sight of. A third set was made at some unspecified date for A. A. Jack. A set was shown by Morris & Co at the Paris Exhibition of 1914; it may have been one of those already mentioned, or still another. Further, in 1873 some windows supplied to 'Pease' included a Medea and an Ariadne which would seem to be additional examples from the same series.

The Victoria and Albert Museum has three panels from this series, *viz*: Amor and Alcestis, Dido and Cleopatra, and Chaucer. Since they were acquired as far back as 1864, it is clear that they could never have formed part of the complete sets. Mr David Gould also has three panels, *viz*: Phyllis and Hypermnestra, Medea and Hypsiphile, and Dido and Cleopatra, which appear to be from an early set. He bought them from a sale at Sotheby's 14 Feb. 1947, the property of P. Lumley Ellis of Littlefield Manor, Worplesdon, Surrey. They do not agree in detail with published reproductions of the Birket Foster set.

D: Another Chaucer series consisted of heads of his heroines in roundels, also from Burne-Jones's designs. The documentation of these is unfortunately very unclear. Only four subjects actually occur in Burne-Jones's account books, dated August 1865; but the complete set of heads in roundels appears to have comprised nine subjects, *viz*: Penelope, Cecily, Cresside, Dorigen, Griselda, Constance, Helen, Chaucer, and (however incongruously) Homer. No complete set is known.

A Penelope at the Victoria and Albert Museum was acquired in 1864. Three panels of the series are in the Birmingham City Art Gallery, to which they were bequeathed in 1927 by J. R. Holliday. They are: Penelope, Dorigen and Constance. It is not known where Holliday acquired them.

Marillier's notes record only two fairly complete sets: 1: for Sidmouth Manor, 1876, comprising the first seven subjects; 2: for Mr Donald of 21 West Princes Street, Glasgow, 1877, comprising the first six subjects. No further information. A third set, of four only, are at Thornbridge Hall; subjects are: Griselda, Dorigen, Constance, and Cresside. In addition, a Penelope was made for 'Roberts' in 1874; and a Constance for 'Mr Rive' in 1880.

Two roundels of this series now at the Labour and William Morris Hall, Wimbledon, *viz.*: Chaucer and Helen of Troy, are said to have been given by William Morris to Chambrey C. Townshend, whose widow and daughter presented them to the Hall in 1931.

E: The series of Minstrel Figures designed by Morris himself at some date between c. 1864 and c. 1871, frequently used as Minstrel Angels in the tracery of church windows, were also popular without wings, for domestic use. A set of 12 was supplied to Sidmouth Manor about 1876. Four, of the same year, are in the window at Thornbridge Hall. Five were supplied in 1877 to 'Ripley'; and four in 1882 to 'Mr Watt'. These last, in two panels each with two figures, have come to rest in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, to which they were presented in 1919 by the daughters of David A. P. Watt in memory of their father. Another two were supplied in 1882 to F. A. Hasserick; and the same two designs in 1878 to Farnham Hall. In 1873 a set of six went to 'Bingley Grange', according to Marillier's notes; this is probably a mistake for Harden Grange, Bingley, from where two such figures were acquired in 1916 by the Bradford City Art Gallery, along with the Tristram and Isoude panels. The other four are missing. Two minstrel figures, together with a Choir of Angels also by Morris, were supplied in 1877 to F. Milbank, of Moreton Gardens (wherever that may be). They are untraced. A single one, together with a Helen of Troy (which was probably a roundel from series D), was done for 'Mr Codman' in 1880. This name should very likely be Major Godman, who was an important client of Philip Webb the architect. A set of five was made in 1901 for Hume Towers, Bournemouth. They survive, but in somewhat damaged condition.

The best remaining examples of these figures, from secular sources, are two in the Birmingham City Art Gallery, and three at the Victoria and Albert Museum. In neither case is it known from where they came.

F: The series of six scenes from the Life of St George, designed by D. G. Rossetti in 1862 again presents problems. According to Marillier's notes, the series was first made for Harden Grange, Bingley, but this is almost certainly a mistake. Whatever its intended destination, however, it seems not to have stayed there, because the set of panels at the Victoria and Albert Museum, bequeathed by J. R. Holliday in 1927, may fairly confidently be identified with it. A second set was made eleven years later,

for Sir William Armstrong; these, like the set of poets, are fitted in the top lights of the library bay window at 'Cragside', Rothbury, Northumberland; and a third set, of five panels only, in 1873 for 'Pease'. These last are untraced.

G: We are now left with a category which can only be called miscellaneous.

1: A Flora designed by Burne-Jones, but not documented, was repeated several times. The first was in 1896 for The Hill, Witley, and was charged to S. G. Cooke of 3 Hyde Gardens, Eastbourne. It was accompanied by a Cecilia. One year later the same two subjects were supplied to 34 Hyde Park Gardens, though this Cecilia was apparently a different design. In 1899 the Flora was also made for Mr Jackson of Welton House, Brough. All of these are untraced.

2: In addition to the Cecílias just mentioned, a repetition of the large figure of St Cecilia from the window in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, was supplied in 1881 to 'Heaton' (presumably Clement Heaton the designer, of the firm of Heaton, Butler and Bayne, themselves makers of stained glass, among other things); and this was followed two years later by repetitions of the three small panels with The Conversion of Valerian, Valerian and the Angel, and The Martyrdom of St Cecilia, from the same window. These are probably identical with glass made for J. D. Birchall of Bowden Hall, Gloucester, containing these subjects, which was dismantled when Major Birchall moved to the Cotswolds about 1926. The three small panels are now in the possession of Lady Birchall at Cotswold Farm, Cirencester. The large panel was for sale in 1926, and is possibly the one now at the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, though the Walthamstow example may be of later date. In fact another Cecilia of his pattern was made in 1883 for a house in Onslow Square; and another in 1895 for the library window at 'Holmstead', presumably a private house; and also in 1895 yet another for 'Sandhays', most likely another private house.

3: In 1870 two windows of Lancelot and Elaine, each with a panel 34 by 20 inches, set in quarries, were supplied to Lunefield, Kirkby Lonsdale. This was a house built by Alfred Waterhouse for Alfred Harris, whose family subsequently moved to Wharfenden, Frimley Green. The windows were then offered for sale back to the firm of Morris & Co. The Elaine panel is presumably that at the Victoria and Albert Museum (C. 321-1927), but the Lancelot panel seems to be lost.

4: A rather unusual commission of 1896 was for repetitions of three subjects of The Virtuous Woman, originally designed by Burne-Jones in 1874 for Paisley Abbey. These were as follows: 'She layeth her hand to the spindle', 'She planteth a vineyard', and 'She stretcheth out her hands to the poor'. They were ordered by Charles Rowley, of New Cross, Manchester; but whether for his own use or for a client is not known. They are untraced.

5: The Seasons. A series of 4 female figures holding sprays. Sets of these were made for 'Mount Temple' and for Sir William Armstrong at 'Cragside', Rothbury; a set now in the Birmingham City Art Gallery may possibly be the 'Mount Temple' one, or it may be a third. The Birmingham set have quarry grounds, with a single tree in each panel, but the 'Cragside' set have

backgrounds filled with foliage. They are placed in the dining room, two on either side of the fireplace. The figures were probably designed by Morris himself; at least, no entry for them appears in Burne-Jones's account books, while attributions to Rossetti or Madox Brown would be out of the question.

If anyone can add to the information summarised here, or help me to trace any of the missing pieces, I should be most grateful. Letters should be addressed to me at 5 Nursery Avenue, Hale, Cheshire. If members of the William Morris Society find these notes interesting, a further series may be published later.