

ST. MARY'S, AYLESBURY.—NEW STAINED GLASS WINDOWS, ETC.

At Christmas, 1870, there was placed in the west window of the north chapel of Aylesbury Church some painted glass, which equals if it does not surpass in beauty some of the most elegant works of art in this kind with which this Church is now adorned. The window is the gift of Mr. Thomas Perrin, a native of Aylesbury, who lived here as a boy, and who, having been successful in life, resolved to testify his regard for his birthplace, and his affection for the Church in which he worshipped in his youth, by this very handsome contribution to its decorative features. Mr. Perrin having made known his kind intentions to the Archdeacon, left the choice of the subject and the artist entirely in his hands. The Archdeacon gave the commission to Messrs. Burlison and Grylls, of Newman Street, Oxford Street, London. The subject selected is "Our Lord's first Miracle in Cana of Galilee," and it occupies the three lights of which the window is composed, each light being surmounted by a canopy. The central light exhibits our Blessed Lord in the foreground in the act of directing the servants, with the bride and bridegroom in the background. In the other lights are represented—on the left, a servant filling the waterpots; and on the right, the Mother of our Lord, and the ruler of the feast

near to her, who is about to taste the wine thus miraculously supplied. Beneath, and running across the picture, are the well-known lines of St. Ambrose on the Festival of the Epiphany :—

“ Novum genus potentiae,
Aque rubescunt hydræ ;
Vinumque jussa fundere
Mutavit unda originem.
Jesu, tibi sit gloria,
Qui apparuisti gentibus.”

At the foot of the central light a chalice is introduced, with a scroll surrounding it, on which are the words—

“ Bibite ex hoc omnes.”

Both the drawing and the execution of this window are admirable. In its general tone it leaves nothing to desire. The window is of the early Perpendicular period, and the colouring of the glass which characterizes the fifteenth century has been so faithfully imitated, that, were it not for its freshness and cleanness, it might easily be mistaken for an old window. Mr. Perrin deserves the gratitude of all the admirers of Aylesbury Church for this valuable addition to the ornaments of the building.

On a brass plate at the base of the window, is the following inscription :—

“ In honorem Dei, nec sine animo memori in Ecclesiam S. Mariæ
in Aylesbury, has tabulas figendas curavit Thomas Perrin, qui hic natus,
necnon ineunte ætate hic quondam commoratus est.

A.S. MDCCCLXX.”

In June, 1871, this Church was enriched with another very beautiful stained glass window, placed in the south chapel by Mr. and Mrs. James Ceely, to the memory of their only son, the late Mr. Arthur James Ceely. The window is the work of Messrs. O'Connor, of Berners Street, London, the same artists who were employed to execute the Tindal window at the west end of the Church. The new window is well worthy of the artists. It represents the miracle of the healing of the centurion's servant, as recorded in St. Matthew and St. Luke. There are six subjects, two in each of the three lights of which the window consists, representing (1), the centurion dedica-

ting the synagogue ; (2), the centurion in command ; (3), the centurion watching over his sick servant : these three form the upper pictures of the three lights. And below, (4), the messengers coming to Christ ; (5), our Lord healing the servant by His word ; (6), the servant healed, and the centurion in adoration. Underneath the subjects are the following legends :—

"Synagogam Ipse ædificavit nobis. Domine, noli vexari. Dic verbo, et sanabitur puer meus. Nec in Israhel tantam fidem inveni."

The whole is treated in a masterly way, more especially the lower groupings, and the figure of our Lord Himself, which stands out in great majesty and beauty. The donors of this beautiful window have no doubt gratified their own feelings by this tribute of affection for their son ; but they have also established a claim to the gratitude of all those to whom Aylesbury Church is dear, by this noble contribution to its decorative features. On a brass plate, at the base of the window, is the following inscription :—

"To the glory of God and the dear memory of Arthur James Ceely, of the 42nd Royal Regiment (the Black Watch), only son of James Henry and Elizabeth Parker Ceely. He died on shipboard, on his homeward passage from India, December 29th, 1866, aged 32 years, and was buried at Point de Galle, Ceylon."

Mr. G. G. Scott, the architect, has kindly given two small statues to fill the niches on either side of the perpendicular doorway leading into the south transept of this Church. The figures were carved by the well-known sculptors, Messrs. Farmer and Brindley, of Westminster-road ; and they are intended to represent St. Peter and St. James, the patron saints respectively of Quarendon and Bierton. These Churches, together with Stoke Mandeville and Buckland, were in ancient times chapels of ease to Aylesbury ; but in the 13th century they were detached from Aylesbury, and ordained a separate Vicarage, under Bierton as the mother Church. In recent times, a further subdivision has taken place, Stoke Mandeville with Buckland having been separated from Bierton in 1858, and constituted another independent Incumbency.