



THE CHOIR OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY, WITH NEW STALLS, SCREEN, &c.

face of the canopies have open-worked tracery in the headings. The western entrance in its form partakes of the character of the canopy to the monument of Aymer de Valence, and is, therefore, of beautiful form. The archway is quatrefoiled; and in the space between the arch-mouldings and the lofty gable, which rises from the pillars at the sides, is a cinquefoil, within a circle, containing a shield, having the arms of Edward the Confessor carved on it in low relief. Trefoiled mouldings fill the spandrels between the circle and arch; and they, and indeed all the spandrels in this beautiful doorway, are filled with delicately-wrought foliage. The crockets and finial to the gable are of peculiarly bold and effective design and workmanship. Behind the gable is a low screen containing organ pipes, and concealing the choir organ; and, on reference to our small illustration of the western entrance, the character and details we have here attempted to describe are fully displayed. As the original western doorway to the choir was much lower in pitch than the one just erected, a croined splay has been introduced with good effect. The doors to the Dean's and Sub-Dean's seats have deep mouldings to them, and have arches carved upon them, richly crocketed; and the spaces above the pediments of the arches have beautiful foliage in them, and shields pendant by their gables or straps. Three steps above that of the floor is the level of the floor of the stalls. In front of the decanal stalls are seats for the vergers, having open-worked arches in front terminated by standards crowned with finials. The

elbow-rests are of good design, with trefoil mouldings in them. The fronts of the pews present a series of double arches, with trefoil mouldings in the spandrels, and mouldings of varied patters in the heads of the arches; buttresses, also, with enriched headings, add their peculiar forms to the effect of the whole, and give great variety. The standards to the book-shelves for the stalls are worthy of especial commendation, the poppy-heads being of admirably varied design and excellent workmanship, and the crockets, foliage work, &c., of beautiful character. The pulpit, reading-desk, &c., are not as yet completed, but will correspond in design with the other portions of the new work.

The great organs which fill up the spaces between the third and fourth pillars westwards of the choir are alike in external character, and have lofty octagonal pinnacles of open-work arches, with buttresses, &c. over the centre and end compartments. The metal pipes to the three fronts of the organ are gilded, and have arabesques painted on them. Not only has the exterior of the organ been thus altered, but the compass and power of the instrument has been greatly added to; and, from the peculiar arrangement of the choir and great organs, the mechanical skill displayed in their construction is most surprising. The organist sits at the keys, which are arranged in triple rows on a large desk, and within which latter are the movements necessary for acting on the choir organ at the right side, the great organs before and behind, and the enormous pedal pipes which are ranged in tiers along the organ loft on

the left hand of the organist; and, as may be imagined, a vast amount of ingenious contrivance has been resorted to in order to attain the required end. The tones of the organ are exquisitely fine, and the vast pile of the Abbey has now an organ worthy of its extent and beauty; and when its full depth of sound is poured forth, every part of the building seems filled with a mighty voice.

The great circular or marigold window, and the triforium, and other windows beneath it, in the south transept, as we before stated, have been filled with stained glass, executed by Messrs. Ward and Nixon; and to the marigold window we must award especial praise, the colours of the glass being exquisitely beautiful. The subjects in the compartments represent incidents in the life of our Saviour, and are designed in excellent imitation of the works of the early artists in glass. The lower windows are nicely drawn in the early style; but we could have wished the figures in the subjects had been a little smaller, as they somewhat diminish the importance and beauty of the marigold window.

The whole of the alterations have been designed by Edward Blore, Esq., and reflect great credit on his taste. The carved wood-work of the stalls, organ, &c., in early decorated style, is entirely executed by Messrs. Ruddle, of Peterborough, and shows that in skill in carving by hand the moderns can compete with their ancient brethren in the craft. The improvements to the organ bear testimony to the talents of Mr. Hill the celebrated builder of such instruments.