

THE KIRKBY FONT

By *F. Charles Larkin, F.R.C.S.*

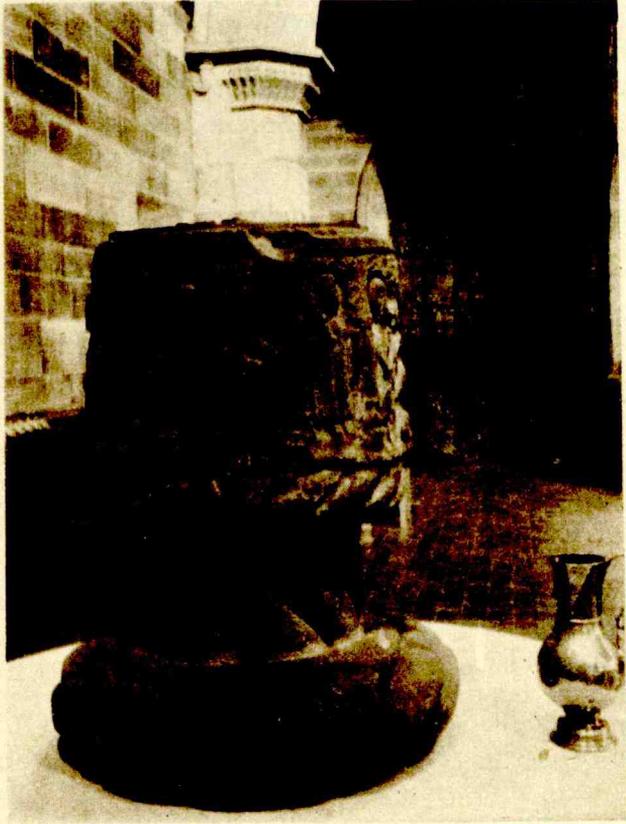
Read 27 November, 1919

THE ancient fonts at Walton and its chapel of Kirkby are happily still preserved to us, though the font at the former place was cast out in 1754 and adopted as a mounting-block by a neighbouring innkeeper, and at Kirkby the font was degraded into a water butt under the school-house spouting, the base serving as a plinth for a sun-dial in the incumbent's garden.

I have spent much time in investigating the history of this latter font, and in following up many collateral lines that might throw light on it and help to fix its date. There is a very good paper on Kirkby in our *Transactions* for 1853-4. It is by the Rev. Thomas Moore, and much of what he says is repeated in the 3rd volume of the *Victoria County History*.

The name Kirkby¹ appears in Domesday Book, suggesting that there was there a church of some sort in pre-Norman times, and on the modern cross, whose base is in the form of a recumbent St. Chad's cross, erected on the site of the ancient chapel altar, there is an inscription asserting that "the Danes found or built a chapel on this spot about A.D. 870." The favourite local tradition is that Chad himself founded a chapel here during one of his missions. If so, it would be 200 years earlier. There is no evidence beyond the name of the place, but the dedication is certainly

¹ Pronounced "Kirby."



THE KIRKBY FONT.

ancient and the name of Chad is otherwise connected with the spot, as the chapel records contain a terrier of about 1733 which mentions "one piece of land called Chad croft on the north side of the church yard." The present church was built in 1869-71, north of the chapel. The latter, of which a picture is given in the above-mentioned volume of our *Transactions*, was pulled down in 1872. It was a poor thing, built in 1766 to replace the ancient chapel, all we know of which is that it had a rood-loft. Some slight details of its plate and ornaments in 1552 are given in Raines' *Chantries* and in *Church Goods* (both Chetham Society). The *Victoria County History* conjectures that in early times Kirkby was a parish and became reduced to a chapelry at some unknown but early date. The font shows it has been a "baptismal church," at any rate, since the 12th century. It is often stated that at chapels-of-ease the priests were not allowed to baptise and that all children had to be taken to the parish church for baptism. No such rule can properly be laid down. Chapels-of-ease do not seem to have had any definite or inherent status. They were merely allowed for local convenience at local expense, without in any way lessening the obligations, financial or other, to the parent church. But they might have almost any powers and privileges they were strong enough to obtain and keep; if they had power enough behind them they might shake off obligations. Mr. Peet tells me that Liverpool Chapel had baptismal rights from quite early times.

When the Kirkby font was turned out of the chapel is not known and there seems to be no record of what took its place to help us. Probably it was at the time of the rebuilding in 1766. The

very great thickness of lime-wash that covered it certainly suggests a long sojourn under Puritan churchwarden guardianship. To this whitewash, however, we largely owe its preservation, such as it is, for the soft local sandstone of which it is made is easily weathered and worn away, and has gone wherever it was exposed. But the caked lime-wash stood, not only the weather, during all the time it acted as a cistern and was consequently saturated with water, but also resisted the industrious attention of the scholars with slate pencils and pocket-knives. For when Mr. Cort, the vicar, partially recognised its worth and promoted it from the office of school-house butt and hone to be the receptacle for the ropes and hooks in the bier-house, it still had a thick covering over all but the most prominent parts. Mr. Cort would not re-admit it to the church. This was done by his successor, Mr. Gray, in 1850, and the base was also returned from the vicarage garden to its proper place. The base and bowl are therefore old ; the shaft is modern.

The font has been mentioned by quite a number of writers, but their statements are almost without exception inaccurate and misleading and show no real acquaintance with the font. The only notice of any real value is Mr. Roberts' paper in our *Transactions* for 1853-4.

In order to know anything of works of this sort, especially if, like this, they are a good deal defaced, one must spend abundance of time so as to become thoroughly familiar with them. One must learn to know all the figures so as to recognise each individually as an old friend. The subject must be visited again and again, seen under all conditions of lighting, illuminated artificially from all points and photographed in all ways so as to get out all remaining detail.

Careful study must be made of how to bring out by very oblique illumination small shadows that reveal almost obliterated markings—quite invisible, at any rate at first, under direct illumination. It is often astonishing how distinct these become when once one has learnt to see them. Attempts should be made to photograph all such markings. One must not be sparing of plates, time, or magnesium ribbon. Small stops are essential. The photographs must be carefully studied with a lens repeatedly. It is of much advantage to make tracings of the negatives, showing the markings, and to compare them with one another and with the original at the next visit. One ought also to try to sketch all the detail. This can be done while exposures are being made.

The font has now been cleaned of its whitewash and stands on a new circular plinth in the western bay of the nave of the church. The ancient base is a great torse or coil—sinistrorsal helix—of two strands. Save in one spot, on the south side, the coil is quite uniform. Here, probably from a fault in the stone, one of the strands is split. I think the coil is very finely executed. Above the coil, worked in the same piece of stone, is a simple round. It forms a circle of about the same diameter as the font bowl, much smaller than the basal coil. The bowl is a cylindrical drum, lead-lined and drained. Between the bowl and the base is a modern shaft, shaped as a vertical spiral of many pieces. The bowl is $25\frac{1}{2}$ ins. vertical; 26 ins. in external and 19 ins. internal diameter; and $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins. thick. The depth of the lead lining is now 10 ins., but the vicar—Mr. Fenn, to whom I am indebted for much encouragement and hospitality while making this study—tells me the bowl is excavated to

twice that depth. The base is 9 ins. high and the shaft $10\frac{1}{2}$ ins. Total height 45 ins. ; without the modern shaft, $34\frac{1}{2}$ ins.

Round the lower part of the outer surface of the bowl is a coil or moulding of what appears to be two, or perhaps in some parts three, strands disposed, like the much larger coil below, in a left-handed twist. On it there are three heads. They have no ears, but are otherwise of the wolfish type often seen on snakes and dragons in early monuments. The Norse artists delighted in representing twisted and coiled serpents. They loved the maze of interlacing convolutions, in which we either get lost, or coming back to the starting-point without knowing it, go on and on again. These symbolised for them the infinite, eternity, as also did the old serpent, the Jörmungand or midgarthworm ; the dangerous monster that Odin attempted to destroy by throwing it into the sea, but which instead grew there so fast that it encircled the earth and being on the very edge of the world could only continue to grow by swallowing its own tail, and so had no beginning and no end. This monster the Norse sailormen saw on every horizon. To them every distant coastline might be the orm, and every headland the orm's or worm's head. The worm was also the Spirit of Evil—the enemy of the gods, whom, with the other powers of darkness, the gods will have to fight in the end “when Ragnarök shall come.” Though his coils were not so frequently represented, yet he still lived on through the middle ages as “the old serpent” of the Revelations, and his head, with wide-open mouth, was the symbolical representation of the entrance to the bottomless pit—“the Hell-mouth” or “Jaws of Hell” we see on the Doom pictures that were painted above

the rood screens—a few of which have come down to us ; we also meet with it in carving, painted glass and MSS.¹ The worm is not quite dead even now, for he lingers yet in the sailor's mind as the sea serpent.

Though, as I shall say later, the evidence compels me to consider it 12th century Norman, I cannot but look on the abundance of snake coils on the Kirkby font as evidence of strong Norse influence. The sculptor seems to have had at the back of his mind—and not very far back—the old Norse mythology, believed in by his ancestors till a few generations ago, and likely believed in by his own generation, though as professing Christians they, no doubt, did not think they did. Old ideas and beliefs, like dialect, die hard.

The use of interlacements and zoomorphic forms of ornament was, of course, very widely spread and not confined to any one stock. They are found from Ireland to the Levant and from Norway to Afr ca. What their source was, who were the originators and who the copyists is a subject of investigation and controversy, and in this connection it should not be forgotten that Lancashire was until 607 part of the Celtic kingdom of Strathclyde. In that year Æthelfrith of Northumbria by winning the battle near Chester, at which the monks of Bangor-is-y-Coed were slaughtered, separated it from the rest of Wales and initiated its conquest. Here as in so much of the rest of the country we do not know how many of the inhabitants or how much of their culture remained to influence the conquerors, nor to what extent the later Danish

¹ That the Hell mouth has Norse associations is supported by its frequent association with the Hell cauldron—the Norse sacrificial ketill.

and Norman conquests affected it. Nor must we forget the possibility of other influences, for many of these ideas were almost universal. The symbolising of eternity by a circle, or a circular coil or torse, or by a serpent swallowing his own tail, is very ancient and wide-spread. The latter was a favourite symbol with the early Christians and is often found on Gnostic gems.¹ But be the origin what it may, the idea the Kirkby sculptor wished to convey to the mind of the onlooker is quite clear. He wished by the great basal coil to express symbolically the belief that the principles for which the font stood rested on the eternal verities, or as more modern people would say, on the "Rock of Ages." Next, by the coil above, he wished to remind us of the also everlasting powers of evil for ever attacking mankind, the latter being represented by the human figures around the bowl.

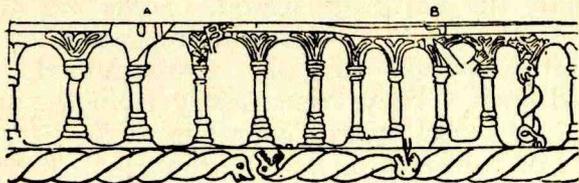
A mere rope moulding is common enough in Norman, as well as in Saxon, work. A good example is seen on the old Wallasey font,² now, with no record, in St. Luke's, Poulton. There it is accompanied by the very Norman indented moulding. The genius of the Kirkby artist, revived the inanimate rope into the circular coiled snake of his forefathers. The modern shaft is hopelessly incongruous. The Norseman's snakes were endless. The shaft is all ends. I believe the font should have no shaft, but should be a simple cylindrical "tub" or "drum" font, like, say, Brighton or Orleton.³

¹ See illustration in Twining, *Symbols and Emblems*; Rees, *Arch. Cambrensis*, 1898, "Norse Element in Celtic Myth," and Romilly Allen, "Interlacings," *ibid.*, 1899. Browne, "Scandinavian and Danish Sculptured Stones," in *Arch. Jnl.*, 1885. Parker's *Gosforth Crosses*.

² Illustrated in vol. liii of our *Transactions*.

³ Illustrated in Bond's *Fonts*.

Above the triple-headed serpent is the arcade. Such arcades are very common on fonts. They are simple and effective, and form a convenient series of niches for figure subjects either painted or sculptured. This arcade consists of eleven round-headed arches, irregular both in height and width, separated from one another by engaged columns. The columns stand on a plinth, which is very irregular, being cut away to a very varying



THE ARCADE.

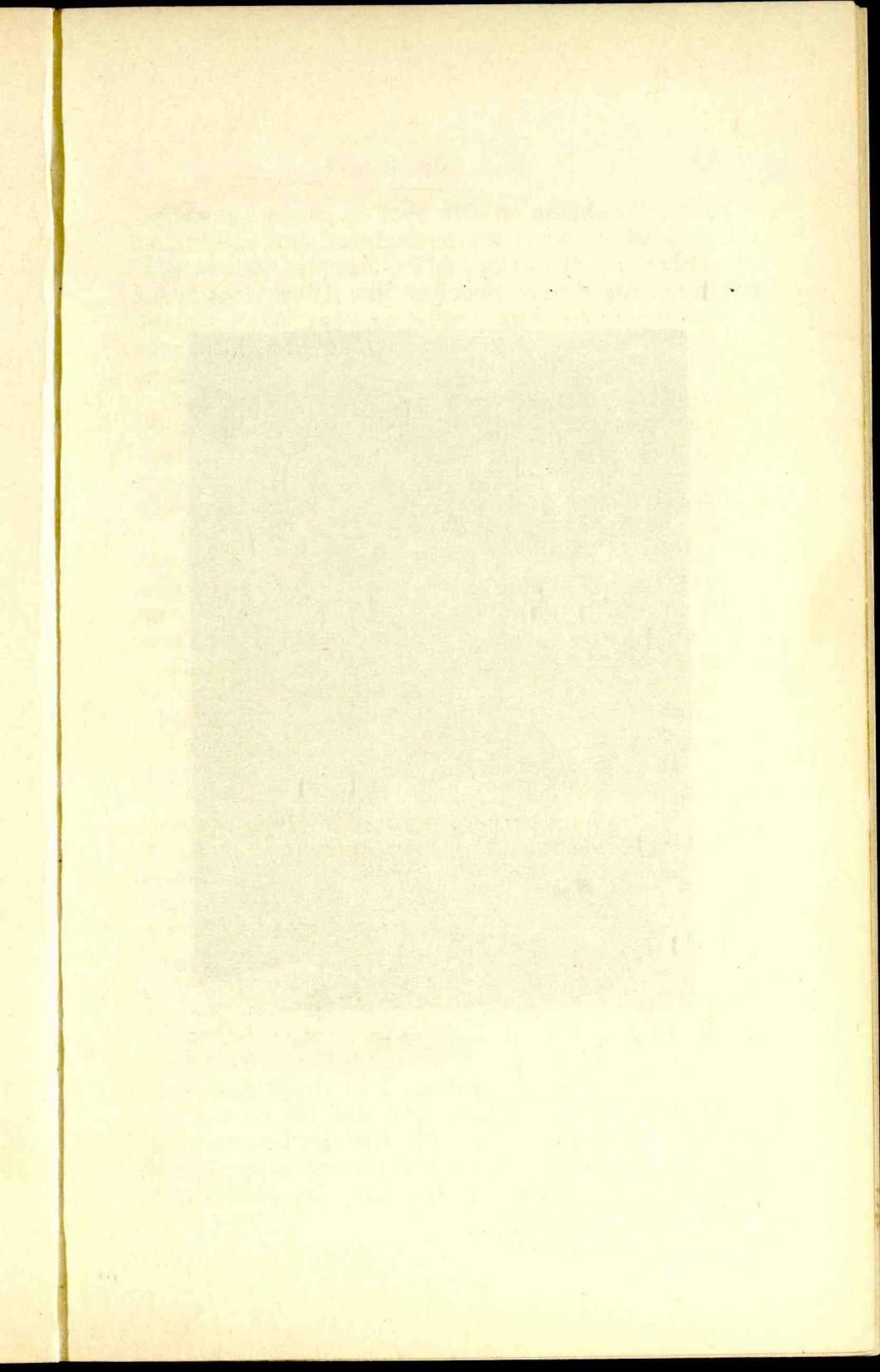
A, B.—Holes for the lock staples.

degree beneath the figures, so allowing the feet to descend to different levels. The work is badly spaced out. Everything is irregular. The bases of the columns are stepped with members varying from two to six in number. Many of the shafts show a slight entasis. The capitals seem mostly to have had a necking and a square abacus. Between these is what may be a cushion capital, but the top corners of all that are not too much worn show little rounded tubercles, which are, I think, remains of the volutes of Corinthianesque early Norman capitals—earlier than cushion. The stepped bases one would consider, if they occurred in architecture, as typically Saxon. This is no doubt one of the reasons why so many have assigned this font to the Saxon period. But in decorative work types remain long after they have been discarded in construction. We find stepped bases on undoubtedly Norman fonts, as *e.g.*, Gillingham (Kent), there accompanied by

billet moulding above and chevron below. The Bayeux Tapestry commonly shows stepped bases. I cannot attach much importance to the entasis, as it is neither uniform nor symmetrical, and looks more as though it had been left to fill in than from design.

The capitals, like the bases, I consider decorative relics of earlier structural types. The arches vary much in span. The wider are practically semi-circular, the narrower stilted. Some are almost of horse-shoe form. The spandrels are filled with unplaited bands, usually two-stranded, with looped ends. They arise mostly from the top of the abacus and spread over the arches, forming a sort of palmette or flower ornament. I do not think it is a common kind. The pre-Norman standing cross at Addingham, near Penrith, has spandrels somewhat similarly filled, but the strands are single and more branched. The Kirkby double strand is more like that intricately laced on many Saxon or Celtic crosses, *e.g.*, Nevern (Pembrokeshire) Cross. What is most characteristic of the earlier work is the plaiting of the strand, which may be double, as at Nevern, but probably more commonly single, as at Winwick (Lancashire), Heysham (Lancashire), Leek (Staffordshire) and Eyam (Derbyshire).

There is nothing necessarily Saxon in the Kirkby arcade, nor, on the other hand, anything that would preclude Saxon date. There is an arcade very like it in one of the illustrations in Cædmon's Paraphrase, which is certainly Saxon. But, as I have already said, Saxon memories long lingered in Norman work. Almost the only font that is universally admitted to be pre-Norman is the one at Deerhurst (Gloucester), and that is almost covered by double-stranded spirals—an ornament Westwood designates as characteristically Celtic.





THE FALL.

As far as I know, no font with an arcade of niches has reasonably established its right to be considered pre-Conquest. The Curdworth (Warwickshire) font, which will be found well illustrated in Bond's *Fonts*, may be Saxon, and before mutilation may have had something approaching such an arcade, but it is doubtful.

Above the Kirkby arcade is a plain band or fillet. In most of the circumference it touches the upper margin of the font, but on what is now the south-east side it drops about half an inch. Slowly leaving the edge above the figure I speak of as P.7, it descends over Adam and Eve and the Cherub and rapidly rises to regain the top edge beyond the figure of St. Michael. It may have been intended for an inscription, but if it ever was a label for such all has now disappeared.

The font has two pairs of holes for lock-staples in accordance with the well-known orders of the Church. They are now south-east and north-west.

I shall commence the description of the niches with those that are now east.

Two, with the intervening column, contain a conventional representation of the "Temptation of Adam and Eve." The column instead of being similar to the rest is made to represent the tree trunk with the serpent coiled around it and the branches spread over the arches. The tree is highly conventionalised with interlacing branches, reminding one of those on the Bayeux Tapestry. Among the branches are rounded lumps—no doubt the apples, and perched at the top is a bird. Somehow one cannot help being reminded of Loké, the Spirit of Evil, in the form of a crow, perched on the mistletoe, planning the death of the pure and beautiful Baldur. Coiled in a right-handed spiral round the tree trunk is the serpent, with a wolf-like head. He looks at Eve and has

an apple in his mouth, lest the one he has already given her should fail. On the East Meon (Hants.) font—one of the Tournai group—Eve is seen actually taking the apple out of the serpent's mouth. In a mural painting at Hardham Church, (Sussex), Eve takes a green apple from the jaws of a serpent with a wolfish head and a small pair of wings just behind his neck.

The Kirkby serpent has around his neck a beaded necklace of what Dr. Nelson says are "characteristic 12th century pearls." His tail is not pointed. The Mediævals did not, it would seem, consider a pointed tail "finished." It ends in a split knob, which may be another head, as there is something that may be an eye. Such are often seen—*e.g.*, on the St. Michael, or St. George and the Dragon lintel at St. Bees, illustrated in Calverley's *Sculptured Crosses, etc., of Diocese of Carlisle*.¹

On either side are Adam and Eve. Adam has a slight moustache and a long, pointed beard. He is $15\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high. Eve is $14\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high. Between the tips of the fingers of the left hand she holds an apple which she is giving to Adam and he is receiving. Eve has a high hair-dress from which depends a long thick coil reaching down her left side nearly to the ground. The coil is right-handed and two-stranded. It is similar to the hair coil of the two female figures on the Gosforth Cross, only it is very much thicker and longer. Eve's face is much worn and her expression is now that of an edentulous old woman.

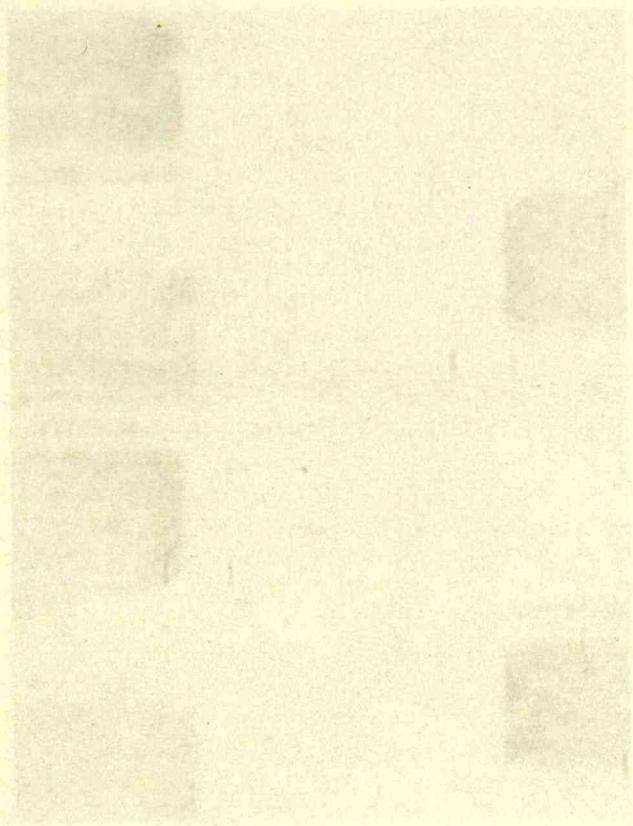
¹ The ancients believed in the existence of a sort of snake, called Amphisbena, with a head at each end, which could travel and otherwise act indifferently both ways. Mediæval bestiaries delight to moralise on this animal. They used him chiefly as a symbol of deceit—"Mr. Facing-both-ways." They also carried the idea further by putting a head on the tail of other animals to indicate that they were acting deceitfully. *Vide Druce, Arch. Jnl.*, 1910.

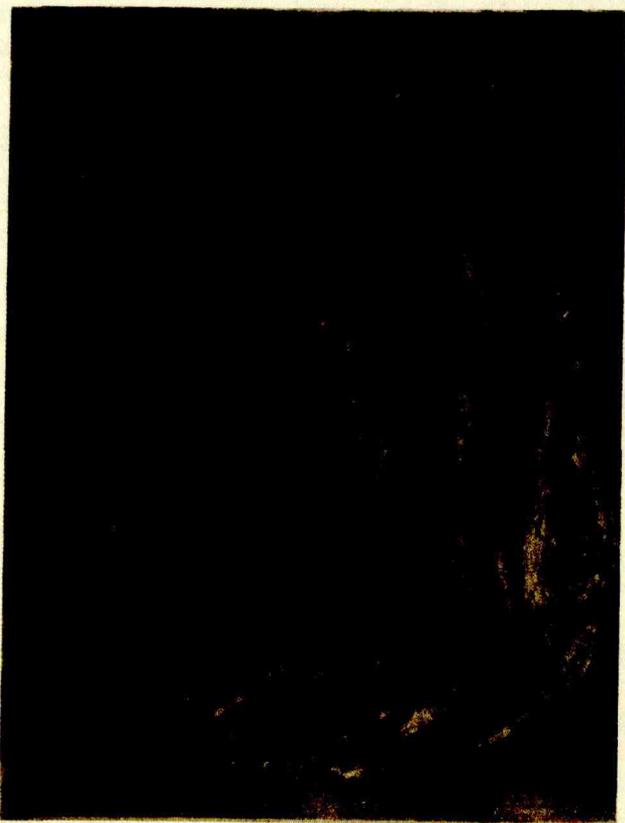
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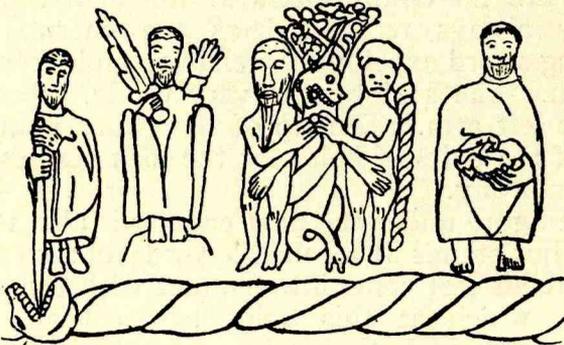
THE CHERUB WITH HIS SWORD.

The niche next to Adam contains a figure 14 ins. high, standing on a slight elevation, with his left hand upraised, using the same sign language as the policeman on point-duty does to-day. He holds in his right hand a sword, which passes up obliquely over his right shoulder. Its blade is broad, with irregular edges. He is bare-headed, bearded, and was probably bare-footed, but his toes are too worn to allow us to be sure of this. He wears a long-sleeved ungirded tunic and on each side of him are long flattened objects reaching from his shoulders to his ankles. They are no doubt intended for folded wings. He is always recognised as the cherub with flaming sword expelling the erring couple from the garden. The sculpture is very crude, especially of the left arm. The tip of the sword points to one of the pairs of holes for the lock staples now broken away.

The figure under the next canopy is also 14 ins. high, but stands at a much lower level : so much so that his feet come into contact with the snake below, which at this point has a head. The figure holds in both hands a spear, which he is driving into the serpent's open mouth. He wears a long, loose ungirded coat, or tunic, with very wide sleeves, so wide at the wrists that they would nearly touch the ground. He is, I think, bearded, and has a lot of hair, which seems to be confined by a sort of fillet. Behind his head is something that sometimes looks like a small nimbus, but it is very doubtful. His shape is very peculiar, and it is suggested that the idea was to give him a round back to indicate the force he is using in his spear-thrust. This figure is generally believed to be in reference to the passage of Genesis iii., 15, translated in the A.V. as: "I will put enmity between thee and the

woman and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"; and Romans xvi., 20: "And the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."¹ But, as the serpent is being speared as well as trodden on, it has been suggested to me that this figure is meant for St. Michael, who by overcoming the Devil reverses the office of the adjacent cherub.

This seems to me to be the better interpretation. The subject was certainly a favourite one. In either case, the idea is the same, but the view



St. Michael. Cherub.

The Fall.

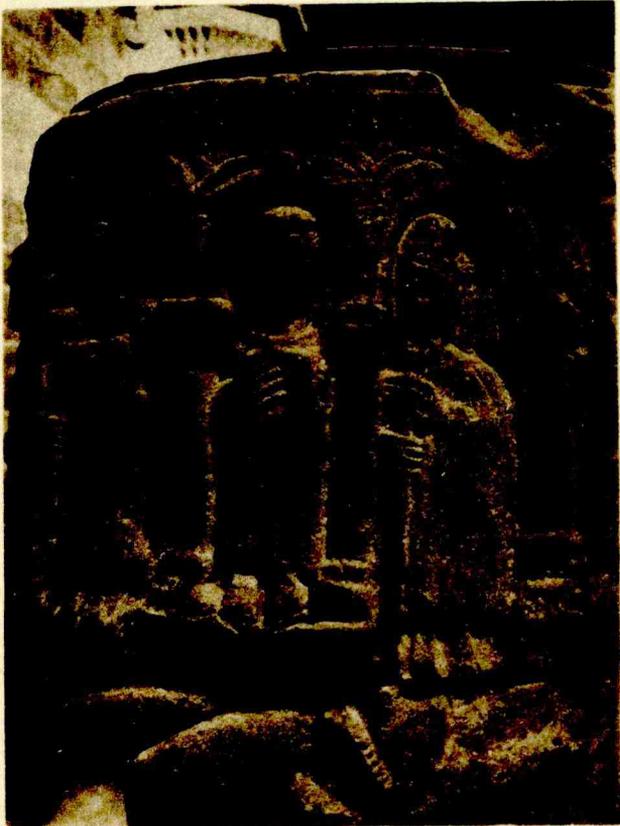
P. 7.

here adopted is, I think, more in keeping with the mentality of the period.

This head of the serpent is a good deal worn, but suggests that the sculptor tried to make it so as not to appear upside down whichever way it is looked at.

The next niche commences a series of seven figures which have certain points in common. They all wear an outer sleeveless garment with a hole for the head and which hangs in a median

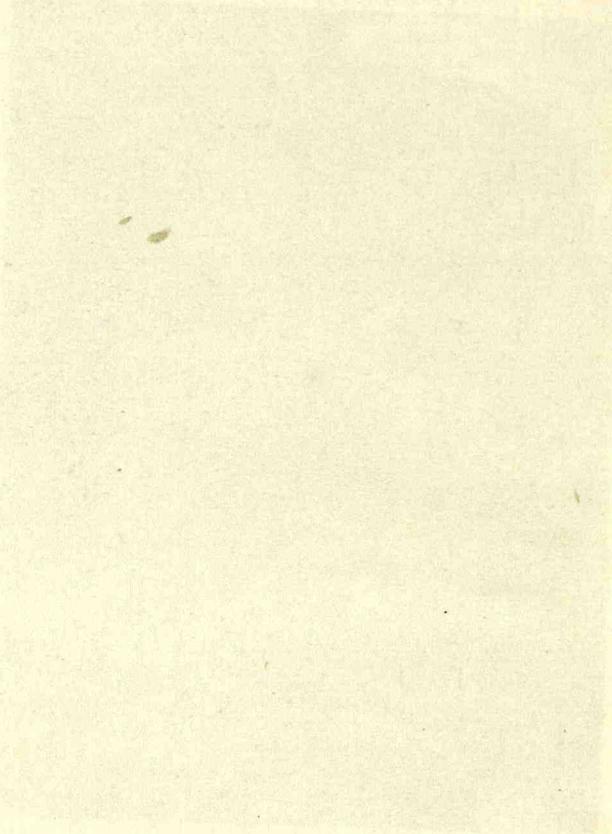
¹ At Parwich (Derbyshire) is an early Norman tympanum (illustrated in *Reliquary*, 1880) in which the Agnus Dei (symbolising Christ) and a hart (symbolising true believers) are shown treading serpents under their feet.



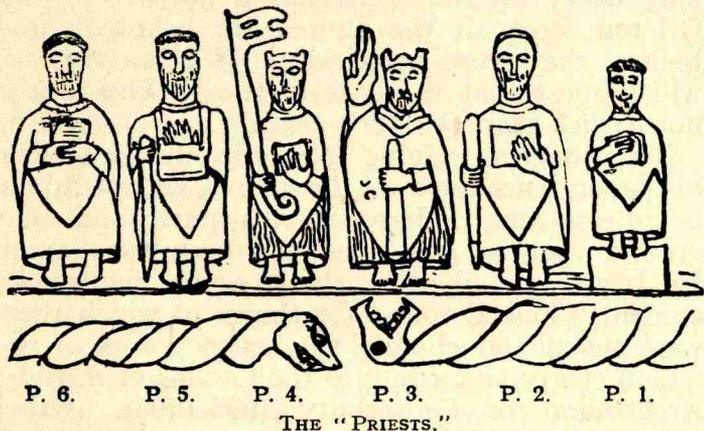
ST. MICHAEL AND THE DRAGON.

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point in front of the legs and is doubtless a chasuble. As this is a vestment usually indicative of the priestly order, I have got into the habit of calling these figures " Priest 1," " Priest 2 ".....to 7, or shortly " P.1."....." P.7." All that are not too much worn show toes, so probably all were bare-footed. The weathered and worn state of the surface has destroyed any tool markings indicative of hair that may have existed, but the shape of the face, especially as seen from the side, can, I think, only mean a short beard.



Given that they have beards, it will help us in dating the font. There seems to be pretty good evidence that in later Anglo-Saxon times priests, and people of importance generally, were mostly accustomed to shave the face; but the wearing of a beard gradually became more and more common during the latter half of the 11th century and by the 12th shaving, by ecclesiastics at any rate, had become exceedingly rare. They did not usually wear a long flowing beard, but "a short crisp beard and moustache." A good example of this type is the beard of St. Nicholas of Myra on

the Winchester font. On the slightly earlier Brighton font he is clean shaven.¹ The mixture of habit at the end of the 11th century is well illustrated by the Bayeux Tapestry where Duke William and Archbishop Stigand are shown maintaining the old fashion of clean shaving. Edward the Confessor is new-fashioned and bearded, while Harold adopts a middle course and shaves the cheeks and chin, but wears a moustache. In the representation of the Last Supper on the Brighton font all the figures are moustached, while only every alternate one has a beard. On the Orleton font² all the figures are bearded, as I believe they were at Kirkby. If I am right, it will suggest that the date of the Kirkby font is not earlier than the 12th century.

Mr. Roberts, judging from the illustrations in his paper, considered all the figures, except Adam, beardless, and perhaps it was partly on that ground that he concluded the font was Saxon. In trying to identify these seven figures he evidently looked round for things of which there were seven and chose "the seven orders of the Saxon clergy, according to the Canons of Ælfric," Archbishop of Canterbury (995-1005). Other things of which there are seven have been tried, *e.g.*, the seven sacraments, common enough on later fonts. But whichever set of seven is chosen, no one dares to be exact. They point out a few possibilities, suggesting that a figure or two may represent so-and-so, and then conclude by adopting some such expedient as Mr. Roberts does when he says that the rest may be seen "each attending to the duties of their respective offices with folded hands."

¹ Both are illustrated in Bond's *Fonts and Font Covers*. The beard was almost universal among priests till the middle of the 14th century, when shaving again became general and so remained for 300 years.

² Illustrated in Bond's *Fonts*.

Many points must be studied in any endeavour to identify such figures, and among these a most important one is the clothing. In studying the history of clothing we have to deal with two entirely different things, that we must be careful not to confuse with one another: (1) Actual ancient clothing itself, for which the materials are relatively scanty—often non-existent; (2) Representations of clothing by the various arts and crafts. The latter afford us quite a large amount of material for systematic study, but it does not seem to have been very thoroughly worked so far. A good deal of valuable work has certainly been done, but unfortunately much has been written that is inaccurate and even untrue; so one has to go back to the representations themselves or to careful reproductions of them, which are numerous.

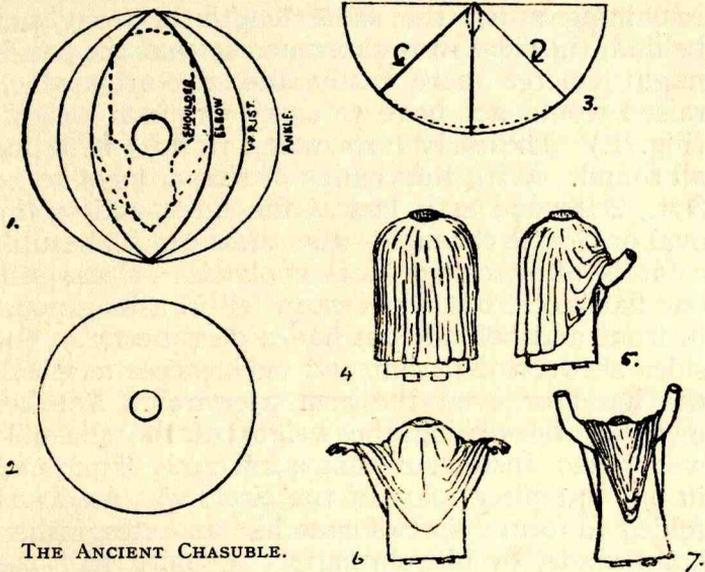
In studying such materials of mediæval times we must always bear two things in mind. First, that the dress is almost always of the time the representation was made and not necessarily at all like that of the time of the event it is endeavouring to portray. Secondly, representation is very largely conventional. Very few, if any, local masons or others, and indeed probably very few of the greater designers, where they existed, ever had posed before them carefully dressed living models. They constructed their figures, etc., in a conventional manner, as they had been taught to do. Further, these conventional representations were not attempts to depict the real in detail, but rather to emphasise some phase or aspect. Moreover, the artist always considered the design and altered nature to suit it; *e.g.*, he knew well enough in which hand the bishop should hold his crosier, but he would not hesitate to put it in the other if it so better fitted into the

composition. We continually see in representations in which two bishops appear, one on each side of the centre, that the artist puts the crozier in the right hand of one and the left of the other to make the design balance better. We must therefore be careful not to argue back to real life from the artistic licence of the sculptor. Moreover, we must not expect to have detail always correct. We have seen much incorrect military detail in modern war pictures, and we have doubtless missed much more. The eye only sees what the mind is trained to see and the hand only imperfectly portrays what the eye sees. For such reasons some consider all attempts to date from detail are necessarily futile. But unless we consider the artist as the product of his day and location all such archæological research comes to an end.

The first of the seven priests (P.1) is a little man—the smallest figure on the font. He is only 13 ins. high, and like the angel stands on an elevated plinth. He is tonsured on the top with a circlet of hair all round: *in modum coronæ*, as it was called—the characteristic tonsure of the Roman Church. As regards vestments, all that show are an alb, from neck to ankle and with sleeve to wrist, covered in part by a chasuble which ends in a point in front of his knees. This should be contrasted with the next figure (P.2), the point of whose chasuble is level with the lower edge of his alb. The left arm does not show. He may have lost it, but more likely it is beneath his chasuble. In his right hand he holds a book.

The form of the chasuble gives us some help in dating the font. The chasuble is descended from the *poenula* or travelling cloak of the Romans—popularly or provincially called *casula*—which

was very similar to the South American poncho, consisting of a single piece of material, with a hole in the centre, through which the head was put, and the material fell over the shoulders to the ground if long enough. (Figs. 2 and 4.) The *poenula* was worn by all—lay and cleric. In its earliest form as a vestment, as far as we know it from the 6th century Ravenna mosaics, etc.,



THE ANCIENT CHASUBLE.

it was perfectly circular and fell in folds from the neck and shoulders to the ankles. It was called *planeta*. There were no holes for the hands, which had to catch hold of things through it,¹ or pull it up over the wrists. (Fig. 6.) When such was done, and *a fortiori* when the hands were raised above the head (Fig. 7), it lay in folds and creases over the arms at the sides, while in front

¹ Some of the very archaic figures on the Curdworth font show a book being held through a vestment, the folds of which are very highly conventionalised.

and behind it fell to a rounded point. It can be easily seen that it must have been heavy and inconvenient, and it became the custom for the deacon to assist the priest to hold it up. As time progressed it became less and less a garment of protection and more and more an ornamental vestment, and thus, especially after the introduction of the practice of elevation, it evolved into a shape more suitable for that use. While remaining much the same length in front and behind, the sides were shortened so that the hands might emerge more easily and the arms when raised would not have to carry so much weight. (Fig. 1.) The early form was 4 ft. to 4 ft. 6 ins. all round. With the change of shape it got to be 3 ft., 2 ft., and even less at the sides, and so the oval or Gothic chasuble—the *vesica piscis* chasuble as it is often called—was evolved. It was still one flat piece, but when worn fell in a long point in front and behind, but had a deep notch at the sides between the front and back pieces in which the hand or even the arm appeared. Another method of lessening the weight of the chasuble was tried. Instead of using a full circle of material in one flat piece, part of the circle was used and folded to form a sort of cone like an extinguisher, lamp-shade, or bicycle cape. Usually half the circle (Fig. 3) of stuff was taken as in making a cope (but shorter), and instead of leaving it open in front like that vestment the straight edges of the diameter were united up the front from the circumference to near the centre where a space was left for the head to pass through, its sides being shaped to the neck. An ancient chasuble of this shape is preserved at Sens and has long been said to be the one worn by Thomas Becket while in exile there (1166-1170). Dr. Rock says that this was the type of chasuble worn by the

Anglo-Saxon priests. I find it not possible to accept this statement entirely even from so learned an authority. The lower edge in front of Becket's chasuble is pared away to make it two inches shorter than the back, while an Anglo-Saxon 10th century pontifical quoted by Bloxam (*Ecclesiastical Vestments, etc.*) orders the chasuble to extend "half-way down in front of the body, but much longer behind." This description closely corresponds with the shape of the chasuble Stigand is shown, on the Bayeux Tapestry, wearing at Harold's coronation.

Now the point to be observed is that the chasubles of the figures on the Kirkby font are not old-form circular chasubles, nor are they "Anglo-Saxon" chasubles, like Becket's or Stigand's, but are *vesica piscis* chasubles, short at the sides and pointed in front and no doubt behind also. This is particularly well seen in the case of the little P.1 figure, for though the left arm is not outside his chasuble, the notch remains and the front point is present. The diagrams show that in a circular or Anglo-Saxon chasuble there is no point unless both arms are out. The Kirkby font chasubles then have shaped front points, not merely adventitious ones. The new shape of chasuble did not come in till, at the earliest, late in the 11th century, and probably not till the 12th, and the old form remained in use for some time after, as we still find it on later monuments, *e.g.*, on the figures of the Orleton font, which in other respects is later than the Kirkby one. No doubt many beautiful vestments bequeathed to churches were prized and carefully kept even for centuries; though I regret to say that most that have come down to us are dreadfully hacked and mutilated to make them into more fashionable shapes without the least regard

to their design and ornament. As the 12th century progressed the front of the chasuble is said to have got shorter and shorter. This seems, generally speaking, to be correct; but as far as Kirkby is concerned it is no help, as the length varies a good deal on the different figures. (Compare P.1 and P.2.) From the shape of the chasubles on the Kirkby font I think we are certainly entitled to say that it is not earlier than very late in the 11th century, and probably later. The chasubles and beards confirm one another in saying it is not Anglo-Saxon.

One other word before leaving the chasuble. It has been said that Mr. Roberts was necessarily wrong in supposing the figures could represent "the seven orders of the Anglo-Saxon Church," for inasmuch as they all wear chasubles none could be in lower than priests' orders. It is true that the chasuble is the eucharistic vestment of the priest, but it has only gradually become so restricted in its use. Pugin in his *Ecclesiastical Ornaments* quotes the Sacramentary of St. Gregory to show that all orders of churchmen in those days wore the *planeta*. He also transcribes Ordo viii. of the most ancient Roman *ordines*, which, dealing with the acolyte, says "induunt clericum illum planetam." It is also laid down that the subdeacon should hold the maniple of the bishop in his left hand on his chasuble doubled back—"super planetam revolutam." "As late as the 9th century Amalarius tells us that the chasuble was worn by all clerics." The Oxford Dictionary says "by the Council of Ratisbon (742 A.D.) it was decreed as the proper dress for the clergy *out of doors*." Also that "as the most ordinary of garments, it was worn by monks." Dominicus Georgius (Giorgi) the Italian ecclesiastic and antiquary (born 1690, died 1747),

says that the habit of both acolytes and lectors "during the first 12 centuries" was a girded alb and plain chasuble, but that the chasuble was put off in the presbytery when they performed their normal duties. On the other hand, Honorius of Autun is quoted as saying that before the 12th century the four minor orders of the clergy wore a superhumeral, alb and girdle only. If so, he must have been referring to what they wore when actually officiating, and even then he forgot the stole and maniple worn by deacons. I read that even to-day some of the lower orders of the clergy sometimes officiate with a folded chasuble over the shoulder instead of a stole. It would seem, therefore, that the mere fact of wearing a chasuble does not prove an early figure to be a priest. So vested he may still be intended for one of the minor clergy.

There is on no figure any sign of amice or maniple, and probably none of stole either. The amice, though introduced as a vestment in the 9th century, was long only wrapped round the shoulders under the alb and did not show. Later it had a parure or apparel which was very conspicuously turned down over the alb to meet the chasuble. But I do not think it ever shows in monuments till well in the 11th century, and by no means usually then. It does not show even in the 12th century sepulchral effigy in Salisbury Cathedral usually assigned to Bishop Roger (ob. 1139) but which Bloxam thinks is Bishop Jocelin's (ob. 1184). So it may well be absent in an out-of-the-way corner like Kirkby about the same time. The stole and maniple are very early vestments—8th century or before. It might quite fairly be argued from their absence that the figures are not vested for any service but are wearing the chasuble as an ordinary garment,

like Abbot Elfnoth, in the well-known picture wears it—without stole or maniple—when presenting his book to St. Augustine (representing the monastery), who has a stole but no maniple. One must not, however, rely too much on the sculpture alone, as these works were afterwards coloured and further detail was added by the painter. It would be interesting to know whether when the whitewash was removed from the Kirkby font any traces were found of gold or colouring. As far as I can learn, no record was kept.

The next priest (P.2) is $15\frac{3}{4}$ ins. high. His feet reach down nearly to the lower edge of the plinth, and his chasuble nearly to the lower edge of his alb. On the latter are some slight vertical markings, plainer on the left side. They are probably pleats, but may indicate a stole. The left arm is seen very clearly to come out of the gap or notch between the front and back portions of the chasuble. He has a book in his left hand, which he holds with his thumb on the open page and his fingers on the back. With his right hand he grasps, a little above the middle, a long staff, which reaches from his shoulder to his ankle. It is rounded at the upper end and gradually tapers downwards. The lower end is sharply pointed and separated from the rest by a sort of neck or ferrule. I consider him pretty clearly bearded. His forehead is smooth and rounded, and appears to have no hair. It certainly does not show the corona of hair and bare top like his little neighbour.² This may have no meaning. Bald-headed men lived then as now, But it is possible, though perhaps not probable, that it may have a

¹ Harleian MS. 2908 (probably 11th century).

² Low down on his forehead there is a sort of inverted V. This is due to wear and weathering of the part below, which I expect was denuded of whitewash and so became exposed.

meaning, especially if (as I suspect) the figures are connected with St. Chad's history. It is possible that this bare forehead may be tonsured in front, as was the habit of the ancient British and Irish priests—what was called the Scots' tonsure.

It will be remembered that from the time of St. Augustine to that of St. Chad a great controversy existed between the British and Roman churches concerning *inter alia* the time of keeping Easter and the shape of the tonsure. The Latin ecclesiastics prevailed at the Synod of Whitby, so graphically described by Bede, and most of the English clergy, including Chad, accepted the decision and conformed.

The figure, P.2, might have been intended to represent Chad as a monk of Lastingham, wearing the Scots' tonsure of his youth. On the top of his head is a sort of cap. The Anglo-Saxon and Norman monks wore hooded cowls and chasubles with hoods were also worn; *e.g.*, the chasuble of Abbot Elfnoth in the above-mentioned illustration. Such hoods usually cover the ears, as in the representation of the Last Supper on Brighton font,¹ but some did not, as in Chaucer's picture in Shaw's *Dresses and Decorations*. This P.2 cap reminds one more of Archbishop Wulfstan's (ob. 1023) in a contemporary drawing reproduced by Strutt.² In some photographs there is a suspicion of a similar knob on the top.

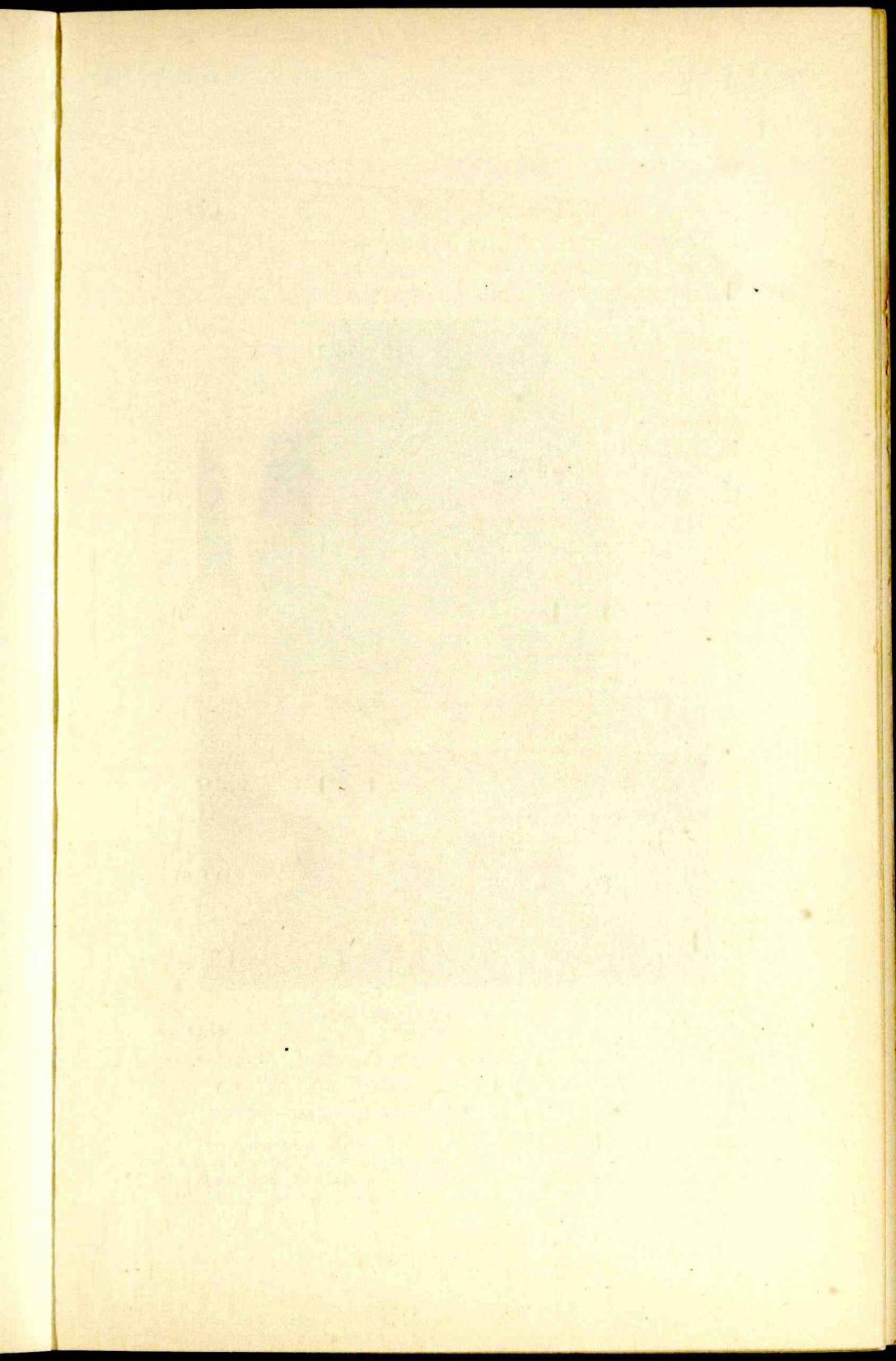
The next figure (P.3) is very definitely bare-footed, all his toes showing clearly. His right hand is raised in the act of giving the benediction in the Latin manner, while in his left he holds something, the nature of which I shall have to discuss at some length. The sleeves of the alb

¹ Bond's *Fonts*, 162.

² *Dresses and Habits of England*.

show well at the wrist, and the point of the chasuble reaches its lower edge. On the right side of the front *lamella* of the chasuble are two marks—the upper crescentic, the lower a full circle. These may not be original. Over the upper edge of the chasuble two other garments show very clearly, but only one shows below, and on this there are wavy markings, as if it was made of hair. The Anglo-Saxon and Norman priests did wear a skin and hair garment—the pelisse, but normally it would not show, as it was worn under the alb or surplice. The latter was indeed an alb made sufficiently roomy to cover the pelisse and was called the superpellicium. He is 15 ins. high, and wears a mitre. The elevated arm, like the angel's, is crudely done. It is more like the joint of a crab than an arm. But the chasuble is managed quite well. The blessing hand is enormous. This was the conventional way of drawing attention to a part. Compare it with the still more enormous bound hands of St. Peter on the above-mentioned Curdworth font. The Norman sculptor never worked to scale, but enlarged and brought out prominently what he wanted seen. In this case he wished to emphasise the fact that this figure was giving the blessing.

The next in order (P.4) is the same height as P.3, and like him is bearded, mitred and bare-footed. He also shows two vestments above the chasuble head-opening. This is not so clear as in P.3, but the top of the second shows clearly as a definite notch on the right side of the neck. All the figures but P.3 and P.4 show only one vestment about the neck above the chasuble opening. The front of the chasuble does not reach quite to the lower edge of the alb and the latter has the same sort of woolly markings as that





ST. PETER WITH HIS KEY.

of P.3. In his left hand he holds a book and in his right is a long object which ends below in a volute. This has usually been considered to be a crosier and I took it to be such, but was surprised to find it being carried upside down. I could find no example of a crosier so carried, though I found several ancient representations of weapons being inverted at funerals as to-day.¹ Looking carefully one day at the Kirkby font, I noticed that while the edge of the so-called crosier that is furthest from the figure can be traced clearly right up almost to the upper margin of the font overlapping the fillet, the nearer edge is only clear to the arch of the niche. Above that it has attached to it three strips, separated by two hollows, which pass over the top of the arch and cover the fillet or label. I came to the conclusion it was not a crosier, but a key, and made tracings of it and diagrams of what I thought its wards had been before being altered by wear and weathering.

Some with whom I discussed the matter said it was too big for a key ; others that a key would never have such a crook-like handle. There is, however, the centre panel of a 13th century ivory triptych in the Mayer Museum, Liverpool, which has in the lower division, in the centre, a carving of the Virgin and Child with, on her left St. Paul with a huge sword, and on her right St. Peter with a key quite as large in proportion as the object on the Kirkby font. So size does not rule a key out. It only emphasises it. As regards the handle, I believe I have seen similar handles in museums, but cannot recollect where. There appears to be little literature of key history. *Primitive Locks and Keys*, by Pitt Rivers, gives

¹ The right-hand figure in the view of the Orleton font in Bond's *Fonts and Font Covers*, appears to hold a short staff with a volute at the lower end, but what looks like a volute is really the folds of a chasuble of the old form.

little help as regards handles. I have wandered in all directions which might prove fruitful, as far as time and opportunity allowed, and have sketched all the interesting keys noticed. Keys have varied a good deal in shape, but perhaps less than one would have thought. Keys were not always *turned* in locks, and probably the usual Anglo-Saxon key with wards on both sides was not. But Anglo-Saxon keys were not all of this shape. We meet with keys much like those of to-day in Anglo-Saxon and Roman times. The handles are usually very much like modern ones, but may be quite straight with or without a hole through them, or they may end in a ring, loop or knob or some highly decorative termination. They were very commonly carried attached to a sort of chatelaine called *clavandier*,¹ suspended from the girdle. The ring of attachment assisted in making the turn and some large keys had a hinged lever attached for the same purpose.² But after all the actual form of the key itself is one thing and its representation in art another. It is certainly quite common to see in illustrations, *e.g.*, in the hand of St. Peter, keys one could hardly consider to be any use in real life. Stowe MS. 944, British Museum, is a register of Martyrology written about 1016-20. It shows St. Peter letting the blessed into heaven, and St. Michael keeping the door of hell. Peter's keys are a pair suspended from a ring. Michael's have perfectly straight handles with no ring, loop, or knob to help in the turn; with one of these he is locking the door. In St. Ethelwold's *Benedictional* several keys are shown. Most have straight handles. One, a very large one, has a ring suspended from the end of the stem and the

¹ The person who carried the keys was called *Claver*. For illustration see *Arch. Jnl.*, 1876.

² Coptic type; *Archæologia*, vol. 48.

wards are bi-lateral with the addition of a large cross paté at the end. The wards of St. Peter's keys are very commonly in the form of a cross—the symbolism being: The Cross, the Key of Heaven. There is a very good example of this in 15th century painted glass at Wodmansterne, in Surrey. Both the handle and wards are in cross form.¹ At the Church of St. Peter ad Vincula, Rome, are kept some iron chains said to have been brought from Jerusalem by the Empress Eudocia² and to be those with which St. Peter was bound. Small fragments or filings of these were considered most holy relics, and the reliquary containing them was usually in the form of a golden key, called a St. Peter's key. Photographs of some of these then surviving are reproduced in the *Archæological Journal* for 1890. They show the wards always in the form of a cross. Westwood, *Anglo-Saxon MSS.*, illustrates a key with a round ball at the end of the shank. Pitt-Rivers gives an Anglo-Saxon key with the shank ending in a simple three-quarter circle loop and keys with similar loops found at Sleaford are illustrated in *Archæologia*, vol. 50. In a Cotton MS. of the time of Henry I. (1135), illustrated and described in *Archæologia*, is a key with the handle ending in a twist towards the ward side and a curve in the opposite direction is to be seen on a sculptured Norman capital from Lewes Priory (*Archæologia*, vol. 31). In Perret's *Catacombes St. Peter* is shown with keys having somewhat similar handles.³

On the reliquary of St. Moedoc—an Irish shrine to be mentioned later—there is a series of figures which probably represent the Apostles. Three

¹ Illustrated in *Archæol. Jnl.*, 1847.

² Or Eudoxia, wife of the Roman Emperor Theodosius II, A.D. 440.

³ See also Fox-Davies, *Art of Heraldry*; keys on "arms" of Emir Arkatay.

on one plate I take to be : in the centre St. John with his cup or flask, on his right St. Paul with his sword, and on his left St. Peter with his key. Everything is very decoratively treated and the emblem which seems to be a key has its handle ending in a volute exactly like that on the Kirkby font. The other end is partly covered by the Apostle's flowing hair. It ends in a cross pommé. If there were wards where the hair covers it, it would be quite similar to the big key in St. Ethelwold's Benedictional, but with a cross pommé at the ward-end instead of a cross paté, and a volute instead of a ring at the end of the handle. I most certainly think it is meant to be a St. Peter's key with the cross-the-key-of-heaven symbol. In very early representations of St. Peter he is said to carry a cross and not a key.

I have not been able to find an unequivocal example of a key with a handle exactly like that on the Kirkby font, but, I submit, I have come very near to it. In the absence of actual proof, appeal to authority is not unjustifiable, and I wrote to ask the opinion of the British Museum authorities. Sir Hercules Read very kindly replied as follows: ". . . . There can be no doubt that the figure you give represents a key and it is by no means unknown for the handle to be a mere curl of iron as seen there."

Mr. Roberts considered the head covering of P.3 and P.4 to be the amice drawn over the head in the way it was worn in early times¹ and still is by certain orders; but I do not think it is so intended. If it were so, the lower edge would not be horizontal and the ears would not show. It is very commonly stated, but I cannot find on what authority, that before the 10th century

¹ See illustrations in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*.

bishops wore "head-linen"—fine flaxen cloth bound flat to the head and confined by a strip of the same material encircling the head and fastened at the back with long ends hanging down, and that out of this the mitre was developed. It is further stated that over this they wore gold and jewelled crowns—like the confessors and others in St. Ethelwold's Benedictional (10th century), or a circlet of gold like that shown on the figure of the Trinity and on St. Benedict in the same work. For my part I do not think that these illustrations are meant to represent terrestrial life, but celestial crowns. Moreover, they are not shown worn over head linen, but on the scalp direct. The Rev. Percy Dearmer, in his *Ornaments of the Ministers*, states that the earliest known representation of a mitre of any kind is on a coin of Bede's friend Egbert, Archbishop of York, 734-766. He says it was a white linen cap very similar to the Phrygian cap or Frigium worn by the Roman freedmen when they shaved their head. Neither the head-linen nor cap seems to have been an official dress. They may have been worn as a protection, especially out of doors. For St. Augustine, quoting St. Paul as his authority, forbade the clergy, as well as the laity, to wear any head covering during divine service (Planché). Bishops in Anglo-Saxon times are certainly usually represented bare-headed, like St. Sextus on the early 10th century maniple of St. Cuthbert found at Durham¹ or Archbishop Stigand² already mentioned.

There are no early orders or regulations concerning the mitre. Dr. Rock says: "No writers on ecclesiastical dress before the 11th century mention it." Ivo of Chartres, who died in 1115,

¹ Illustrated in Raine's *St. Cuthbert*, p. 33.

² Bayeux Tapestry.

writing on Jewish and Christian priestly dress, mentions no Christian equivalent of the Jewish mitre. The mitre seems at first to have been a special and personal distinction conferred by the Roman Pontiff and was not confined to the clergy. Pope Alexander II. in 1163 conferred the mitre as well as the pallium on Burchard, Bishop of Halberstadt,¹ as a special honour on account of his great services to the Holy See, and he also, as a special mark of esteem gave Wratisslas, Duke of Bohemia, permission to wear the mitre. Pope Innocent II. gave the same honour to Roger, Count of Sicily.² Early in the 11th century we begin to come across episcopal head covering worn apparently as official dress. It was then in the form of a skull cap, and sometimes had a sort of bob on the top of it, as in the picture of Archbishop Wulfstan, already mentioned.³ Generally it had streamers, *infulae* or *vittae*—fringed at the ends, and sometimes so broad as to make it almost a hood. The earliest representation of the skull cap with *vittae* that I have seen is on two figures on the well-known British Museum MS., Claudius, A.3—the centre figure, usually called St. Dunstan, and one of the kneeling figures.⁴ A 12th century Roman Pontiff is shown in a similar round-topped mitre in an early MS. reproduced in the supplement to Jaquemin's *Iconographie du Costume*. This form by gradual increase in height developed into the recognised mitre of the Russian bishops. In Western Europe the round top soon received a front to back indentation, exactly like that of the soft felt hat of to-day. A mitre of this form,

¹ Larousse, *Grand Dictionnaire Universel*.

² See Planché, *Cyc. of Costume*.

³ *Vide* description of P. 3.

⁴ Dearmer points out that the centre figure is shown by the emblem of the whispering dove to be St. Gregory the Great. The kneeling figure is St. Dunstan.

with an early type of crosier.¹ A very similar head-dress is illustrated in Perret's *Catacombes de Rome*. Its date I will not guess. In some places these side peaks developed into rounded horns or volutes, as is well seen in the beautiful reproduction of the effigy of Ulger, Bishop of Angers, 1149, in Planché's *Cyclopædia of Costume*. But they seem usually to have tended to get smaller and at the same time an elevation began to appear in the centre of the hollow on the top of the head. This is well seen in the illustration from the *Vision of Henry I.* (ob. 1135) reproduced in Knight's *Old England*. This central elevation grew into a front to back ridge, and this is the shape worn by the two mitred figures (P.3 and P.4) on the Kirkby font. The next stage in development was the growth of the front and back ends of this fore and aft ridge into elevated points. This type is well seen on the font at St. Nicholas' Church, Brighton (Sussex), and if we ornament each point of this mitre with a ball we get the mitre of St. Nicholas on the Winchester font. The next change was for the side elevations to disappear altogether, and so is produced the early form of the present type of mitre. It is well illustrated with ornamental band and titulus by the bishop of the Lewis chessmen in the British Museum. The chief subsequent change was the gradual growth in the height of the front and back elevations. In the 13th century they were 6 ins. high. The beautiful Limerick mitre of the early 15th century is 13 ins. Ultimately, in the 16th century and later, they got grotesquely elevated and ogeed.

The mitre that is kept as Becket's at Sens, if the one he really wore, would show that Sens was nearly half a century ahead of the rest of the

¹ See illustration under Coffin, Parker's *Glossary of Architecture*.

world in this matter. Shaw, who carefully illustrated it in his *Dresses and Decorations*, evidently had his doubts. It is $7\frac{1}{8}$ ins. high, and therefore higher than 13th century mitres usually are. The point is exactly a right-angle. Harley Roll, Y.6, Brit. Mus., is a late 12th century vellum roll, giving the life of St. Guthlac, the hermit of Crowland. In one of the illustrations he is shown being ordained priest by Bishop Hedda, of Winchester,¹ who wears a mitre like the one at Sens, with a right-angle point, but not quite so high. This strongly confirms the view that the Sens mitre is at least 13th century, and the change from side to front and back elevations took place shortly before the end of the 12th century.²

The Winchester font is fairly accurately datable. It is one of the Tournai fonts, "shop-made" and imported into England, it is believed, by Bishop Henry of Blois (bishop 1129-1171) and given to the cathedral. It has cushion capitals on the "cathedral," which shows it is later than the Kirkby font with its Corinthianesque capitals. It has plantain leaf capitals on the corner shafts of the support and these are later still. We shall not be far wrong in dating the Winchester font about or soon after the martyrdom of Becket

¹ The words on the roll are: "Guthl' Sac'dotiu' [sacerdotium] suscipit a Hedda ep'o [episcopo] Wintoniensi."

At the time of Guthlac (663-714) there were two bishops with similar and variously spelt names. They have been much confused with each other. One usually called Hedda was Bishop of Winchester from 676 to 705. The other, usually spelt Headda, was Bishop of Lichfield, 691-720. (See Searle, *Anglo-Saxon Bishops, etc.*, 1899, pp. 64 and 128.) As has been seen, the Harley Roll ascribes Guthlac's ordination to the former. The *Acta Sanctorum*, April 11, prints the Felix Life of Guthlac, in which, while the name of the ordaining bishop is given as Hedda, his diocese is not mentioned. The Editors, however, agree with the roll in identifying him with the Winchester prelate. On the other hand, the D.N.B. suggests he was the Bishop of Lichfield.

² The bishops on the stone with Ogham inscription at Bressay, Shetlands, usually attributed to a much earlier date, have low mitres, pointed in front and behind. *Vide Reliquary*, 1884-5.

(1170). The detail of the Brighton font is distinctly a little earlier and Kirkby in development is earlier still. In actual date, however, it is highly probable that it would be a little later, for when dates can be actually fixed by written records or otherwise it is usually found that local work in out-of-the-way places is a good deal behind in development. It is, of course, impossible to be exact, but taking all the evidence into consideration I do not think we can reasonably fix the date of Kirkby font earlier than the last quarter of the 12th century, and to that time I attribute it.

I am now going to claim that I have reasonably established that the two figures P.3 and P.4 are mitred, and therefore intended for bishops; that P.4 has a key in his hand, and is therefore intended for St. Peter. Who is the other bishop meant to be? The only distinctive thing about him is the object he carries in his left hand. The carrying of some sort of staff was very usual in ancient times. The traveller or pilgrim used one to help him along, to sling his pack or wallet, and, if needs be, for defence. Before seats were so frequent people rested a good deal on sticks and staves. In the middle ages there were no seats in churches, and people, especially the aged, leaned on staves or sat on crutch sticks during long services. St. Aldhelm leaned on his staff through so long a sermon that it took root in the ground where it rested, and actually blossomed in his hand before the preacher had finished his discourse, and ever since the blossoming staff has been St. Aldhelm's emblem. The staff was naturally the sign of the elderly more than of the young, and in the Church quite early got to be a recognised characteristic of a bishop. Further, the carrying of a staff as an emblem of

authority is a very widespread custom from the sceptre of the sovereign to the wand of the conjurer. By the 6th century the staff had become a recognised episcopal ornament, being mentioned as such in the Sacramentary of St. Gregory, but it had no definite form fixed by custom or authority. The Rev. F. G. Lee, in *Archæologia*, vol. 51, says: "The earliest representations of an official staff in the hands of an apostle, pope, patriarch, or prelate appear to be quite plain; sometimes without knob or ball on the top or any kind of addition or ornament." He gives no illustrations, but says that such staves are represented in mosaics, paintings or sculpture at Rome, Venice, Torcello, Padua, Milan, Pavia, Perugia, Zara and Pola. It was customary to represent the Deity in papal or episcopal robes, and in Cædmon's Paraphrase the Creator is always so robed and carries a short straight baculum. The ancient wooden staff at Trèves, reputed to be that of St. Peter, is also quite straight. It is now cased in silver with peep-holes of crystal.

The staff was often ornamented. An early form was a globe at the end, or two globes, or a globe surmounted by a cross. The latter became the official form of the Maronite bishops, and we still meet with it on official staffs in this country, as on the royal sceptre and on many maces and wands of office. Another much used form was the Tau-staff or crutch stick. It seems to have been official at one time, and appears on the well-known seal of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, and in vol. 21 of *Archæologia* a seal of Geoffrey,¹ Bishop of Lincoln, dated 1174, is illustrated, showing him carrying over his right shoulder a pastoral crutch. The "crutch stick of St. Thomas of

¹ Son of Henry II. and Fair Rosamond.

Canterbury" was one of the most prized relics of old St. Paul's, London. Many such Tau-staves—some beautifully carved—are to be seen in the museums of this country and the Continent. It was adopted as the official form by the Oriental prelates.

The short curved divining rod, *Litmus*,¹ of the Roman augurs is said never to have disappeared as an emblem of office and out of it grew the crook of the western bishops, influenced probably by the frequent representation in the catacombs and elsewhere of the Good Shepherd, crook in hand, surrounded by His sheep. In early times the crooked staff was usually much shorter than it was later. St. Nicholas' crosier on the Brighton font is quite short. Not infrequently they were as short as an ordinary walking stick (about a yard).² The favourite wood seems to have been yew. The crosier of St. Melis (Irish, 12th century) is 3 ft. 0½ in. The beautiful Clonmacnoise crosier (9th or 11th century) is 3 ft. 2 ins. The quigrich of St. Fillan of Aberdeenshire was the old saint's plain straight staff. All that now remains is the beautiful metal crook that was fitted to it. The opposite is the case with the Bachul of Moloc. All its ornaments have been stolen off it and the staff would also have probably disappeared only for the fact that its possessor, through it, holds certain property (*Arch. Jnl.*, 1859). Giraldus Cambrensis (1185) tells us how highly venerated were the staves of the old missionary fathers and many of the gilt and jewelled crosiers of mediæval times were really but the cases in which these venerable, perhaps

¹ Vide Smith's *Dict. G. & R. Antiqs.*

² Early sculptured representations of bishops with such short crosiers may be seen on St. Gobnet's Stone, Ballyvourney, Co. Cork (*Archæol. Jnl.*, 1855) and Bressay (Shetlands) Ogham Stone, *Reliq.*, 1884-5.

miracle-working, relics were enshrined. Westwood¹ says that the worn parts of these short staves show that they were carried crook up over the shoulder. But that they were sometimes carried like a walking stick is shown by the picture of St. Luke in the Gospels of MacDurnan, an early 9th century MS. in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth Palace. St. Matthew's picture in the same work tells us that the long crosier was also in use at the same time. It was this latter that developed into the beautiful carved, tabernacled and enamelled crosier of later date. It gradually replaced all others in the Western church, from the 11th century onwards, but apparently had not entirely superseded the straight *baculum* even in the 14th century, if we may judge from the slab, of that date, on the tomb of the founder, St. Yestin, in Llaniestin church, Anglesey.²

Among all these varied forms of episcopal crosier, *baculum*, or *cambutta*, there is nothing at all like the object P.3 carries in his hand. It is flat, with squared edges. It is just short of 7 ins. long. Its upper end is rounded. Half an inch from the very top it is $\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide, and gradually broadens to the lower end, which is $1\frac{1}{4}$ ins. across. The lower border is nearly straight and squared. These dimensions mean that proportionately to life-size it would be a flat wedge-shaped object nearly a yard long, with a base 6 ins. across and gradually narrowing to between 3 or 4 ins. before it was rounded off at the top. Some of the photographs of this object show slight notching on each side, near the lower end. This made me think it might be an asperge, but careful examination convinces me that the notches are due to injury.

¹ *Anglo-Saxon and Irish MSS.*

² Illustrated in *Arch. Cambrensis* (1847).

A club or mace has been suggested, as an object that widens from the handle to the other end, and a club is the symbol of two Apostles, St. Simon and St. James, and of at least eleven other saints, but a club would not be represented flat, with square edges and would not be carried in this manner.¹ Mr. Roberts has suggested that some of the figures, he does not say which, carry candles. I cannot agree. The characteristic part of a candle is its flame, and there is nothing to suggest it, and candles are always circular in section, not flat. They are frequently represented as gradually narrowing—tapering—to the burning end. A good example is seen in the 14th century representation of the Mass in plate 32, vol. I. of Mercuri and Bonnard's *Costumes Historiques*. The only thing I can think of that is the shape of the object under discussion is the opening of some Saxon or Early Norman windows, e.g., those of Hardham Church, Sussex.

Finding no explanation in real life, I turned my thoughts to symbolism and sought for something as being symbolised of this shape. In representations of the Baptism of Christ, diverging lines are often shown passing from the beak of a dove towards the head of the Baptised and are intended to signify radiations of Divine influence passing from the Holy Spirit to the Saviour.² Such radiations are shown in other baptisms, as for example, the "Baptism of a Goth" in

¹ For a man carrying a club see Kirkburn font in Bond's *Fonts*, p. 161.

² Bond, in *Fonts and Font Covers*, gives several excellent illustrations, but considers these lines to represent streams of water (*vide* p. 14 *passim*). The incorrectness of such an explanation will at once be seen on applying it to examples other than baptisms. That the ancients had the idea of radiations is shown, for example, by the following: ". . . the mutual gaze of persons, and that which emanates from their eyes, whether we call it light or something else . . ." and "there is so great a penetration into the inward parts by a look . . ." —Plutarch's *Symposium*, Book v., prob. 7.

Munter's *Sinnbilder*, or the tombstone at Aquileia, in Bond.¹ They also occur in representations of the Annunciation² and in blessings generally. Moreover, the radiations do not always come from the Dove. They often proceed from the Divine hand (*Dextera Dei*) or from a cloud or crescent or other symbolic representation of heaven.³

The beautiful enamelled 14th century Siensese morse in the British Museum has on it a representation of the birth of John the Baptist. Here a single gradually diverging ray descends from Heaven on to the infant. The 6th century Italian ivory in the same museum, illustration of which forms plate iii. of the *Guide to Early Christian Antiquities*, shows excellent carved examples of wedge-shaped rays proceeding from a cloud.

But it was not only spiritual influences that were so represented. The symbolists indicated all emanations, radiations or influences in this way. As for instance, light from a star.⁴ Sunbeams are figured in the same way. Indeed, there can be little doubt that from them, as seen when the sun is behind a cloud or his light comes through a chink into a dark room, the idea originated of representing beams of radiation by long, slightly widening wedges. Radiations were not always shown diverging from their source. They were frequently represented as converging to their recipient. This method is very ancient, and is found in hieroglyphics.⁵ It was commonly

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

² Bock, *Geschichte der liturgischen Gewaender des Mittelalters*. Plate xiii.

³ See Twining, *Symbols and Emblems*. Blessing of Isaiah from 10th century German MS. and Blessing of Charles the Bald from his 9th century illustrated Bible.

⁴ Illustration from painted glass in Lyons Cathedral. Twining, *op. cit.*

⁵ See Clodd, *History of Alphabet*, p. 170.

used in classical times as, for example, in the rays of the corona radiata.¹ It was the method usually adopted by the heralds and in decorative designs and fabrics to which it better lent itself.²

The Dove in the baptism of Christ on the font in Shorne church (Kent) has such rays, and they are usual in representations of the Holy Eucharist. In the heraldic badge of the "Rising Sun" they come from behind a cloud. In "the Sun-in-splendour" they are still more decoratively treated, each alternate ray being given the wavy outline of a flame. The heralds did not, however, always use this method. Occasionally they used the more naturalistic diverging beam, as, for example, in the Yorkist sun³ and around the star of the garter and other orders.⁴

To summarise: The ancients and mediævals, the heralds, decorative artists and symbolists generally, though differing slightly in detail, all agree in representing rays of light or of spiritual influence by long narrow wedges. Such, then, was the single symbolic ray, and such is the shape of the object P.3 carries in his left hand.

There is a story of St. Chad, which, though it does not appear in any extant life of the saint, is said to have been very popular in the middle ages.⁵ It made him the chief instrument in

¹ See coin of Ptolemy V., illustrated in *Arch. Jnl.*, 1897.

² For good reproductions of such fabrics, see Bock *op. cit.*

³ Illustrated in Planché, *Cycl. of Costume*.

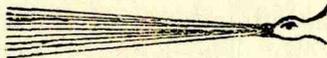
⁴ Similar to, but immensely older than the examples I have cited is the obelisk, with its gradually diverging sides. Obelisks were dedicated to the sun-god—the fertiliser of the earth. Pliny tells us that each was a sun's-ray in stone—"effigies radiorum solis." The pyramids are but very obtuse obelisks, and the word is said to mean "sun's ray" (*vide* Dodd's paper on the *Rudstone* in *Reliquary*, vol. 14).

⁵ The story occurs in the life of SS Wulfad and Ruffin, which was printed in Dugdale's *Monasticon* (1846 ed., vol. vi., pp. 226-30) and subsequently in the *Acta SS.* (July, vol. v., pp. 575-81). For the MSS. see Hardy, *Descript. Catal.* (Rolls Ser.), I., pp. 269-72.

Bpm. of Christ : 7th c. Catacombs.



Annunc'n. : Bock's Geschichte.



Bpm. of Christ : Bamberg Ivory.



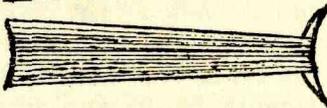
Blessing of Isaiah : 10th c. Gr. MS.
(Twining, S. & E.).



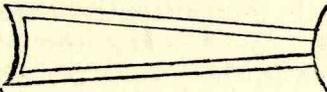
Star's Rays. Painted Glass.
Lyons Cath. (Twining, S. & E.).



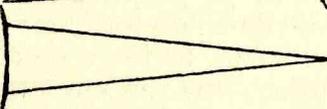
Birth John the B. Siense Morse :
14th c. Brit. Mus.



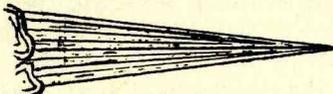
Bpm. of Christ : Ivory. 6th c.
Brit. Mus.



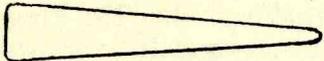
Ray of Sun, Stars, &c.



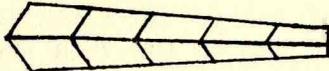
Ray of " Rising Sun " :
Royal Badge.



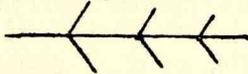
Ray of " Yorkist Sun " :
Planché, Cyc. of Costume.



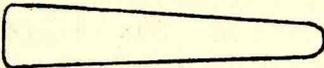
Ray of Garter Star, &c.



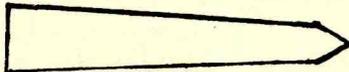
St. Chad's Emblem :
Clog Almanacks.



Kirkby Font Emblem.



Obelisk.



VARIOUS FORMS OF THE RAY.

the conversion of Mercia. It is told with the usual abundance of picturesque and contradictory detail. The King of Mercia, Wulphere, who, by the way was father of St. Werburgh of Chester, had been christened in his youth, but had reverted to heathenism, and had murdered two of his sons, Wulfad and Ruffin,¹ on learning they had become Christians. But becoming dangerously ill, and fearing death, he was smitten with remorse, and repaired to Chad for consolation. When the king arrived Chad was saying mass in his little oratory, and as soon as the office was ended, he hurriedly removed his vestments to go and meet the king, and in his haste inadvertently hung them on a sunbeam that was crossing the room instead of hanging them in the proper place. The king, entering the small dark oratory, for in those days windows were small, as there was no glass to keep out the weather, saw the sun streaming through the little window and hanging on the bright beam were Chad's vestments. He could not believe his eyes, so drawing near he placed his gloves and baldrick on the sunbeam, but they fell straight through it to the ground. The king at once understood that Chad was a holy man, whom the sun obeyed, and whose beams were subservient to his commands. So the king was converted and all Mercia with him, and in the 12th century, at the time the font was made, the people of Kirkby would associate St. Chad and his sunbeam with the conversion of their district to Christianity.

Chad is one of those saints who are said to have no emblem; but I suggest that he had, and that here on the Kirkby font is St. Chad carrying his sunbeam.

¹ Both afterwards canonised.

A beam of light is the symbol of several other saints. In the cases of the Venerable Bede and of St. Ewald it shines on them from heaven. St. Odo of Ghent is very similar. St. Posidonius's shines on him while praying in a dark cave. Our pagan ancestors materialised the rainbow—Bifrost, and made it a bridge from earth to heaven, guarded by Heimdall. The mediævals adopted the idea, but changed Heimdall into Christ, so that none could pass from earth to heaven except through Him. Thus we see it on the "Dooms," as at Wenhaston (Suffolk) and elsewhere.¹ In the same way the sunbeam was materialised in connection with St. Chad, who had used it as a clothes-peg. Baring-Gould and other modern writers tell us that St. Chad's emblem in the clog almanacks is "a branch."² I believe they all get this from that curious and interesting mass of *obiter dicta*, Plot's *Natural History of Staffordshire* (Oxford, 1686). Plot gives a very full description of the Staffordshire clogs. These are staves carved as perpetual calendars with hieroglyphic-like signs for important events. In giving the meaning of the different signs, he says: "a bough against 2 of March for St. Ceadda, who lived a hermit's life in the woods near Lichfield." "The bough" is a straight line with other lines diverging from it on either side, always in opposite pairs like the mid-rib and opposite secondary ribs of a pennate leaf. What the origin of this sign is is not known, but it is significant that it consists so largely of divergent lines.

In relation to the two mitred figures the snake coil has two heads. The head beneath the giver of the benediction is looking upwards and

¹ Illustrated in Clinch, *Old English Churches*, Fig. 93.

² Bond calls St. Chad's emblem a "vine branch."

with open mouth biting furiously at him. While the head beneath the key-bearer is directed downwards, with closed mouth, in obvious defeat. Mr. Roberts expresses this as follows: "The snake heads are symbolical of the power given to the Church to contend with and overcome the Spirit of Evil." It may possibly refer also to the above-mentioned contention between the Celtic churches of the British Isles and the Church of Rome and the victory of the latter as symbolised by St. Peter.

Figure P.5, one of the tallest of the series, $16\frac{1}{2}$ ins., gives us another of the many puzzles of the font. It is a good deal worn and the stone has several faults—soft patches which have yielded holes. He is bare-headed, and, I think, tonsured and bearded. He has on a chasuble, and one other vestment is visible beneath it. The point of the front lamina of the chasuble falls well short of the edge of the alb. He carries in his right hand a staff, which is very similar to the one carried by P.2, only there is no sign of ferrule near the lower end. The end of the thumb shows as a lump just above his fingers which grasp the staff, and opposite it on the outer side of the staff is something that may be the hook of a palmer's staff. Some have considered this and what I think is his thumb to be the cross guard of a sword.

In front of his body is a rectangular oblong object, suspended from his shoulders by two straps, and under this his left hand rests flat on his breast, palm down. The two straps may be intended to be continuous with one another behind his neck and so form a single handle or suspender. On the right side the strap is attached to the extreme right of the upper margin, but on the left it appears to be split into three pieces,



THE FIGURES P 6 and 5.

which are attached to the corner and upper part of the left lateral edge. The front surface of the quadrilateral has clearly an upper and a lower part, separated by a depression, the upper part overhanging. When viewed from the left side this object gives an appearance very strongly suggestive of a chalice in a bag, but careful examination has convinced me that the appearance is fictitious and due to the large hole in the stone. Mr. Roberts evidently thought the quadrilateral was a satchel for the sacred vessels or something of the sort as he vaguely speaks of the subdeacon with the sacred vessels, and of course one of the duties of that official is to carry them in the offertory veil. Mr. Roberts may have thought this an early representation of that vestment. But if such were the case he would hardly have a stick in one hand and the other hand flat on his breast; he would be holding the vessels wrapped in the veil. He is not holding it. It hangs from his neck, and his hands are free.¹ I do not deny the possibility of this being some sort of case for chalice and paten, for Bede, speaking of missionary times, says: ". . . Oratories . . . could not be made in the early infancy of the Church." And in the life of St. Willibald (c. 700) we are told that in the 7th century it was customary to erect crosses at which the services of the Church were held. So the itinerant clergy must have carried the sacred vessels with them, which almost necessitates a bag of some kind. Cuir bouilli cases of much later date for sacramental plate may be seen in the British Museum and elsewhere.² If his staff is a palmer's bourdon

¹ The suggestion that it is a burse may, I think, be similarly dismissed. Large rationals were sometimes worn, but would not be suspended from the neck.

² e.g., from Little Weltham Church (Suffolk), illustrated in *British Museum Guide to Mediæval Room*, fig. 28.

the oblong object would be his scrip, and such it may be, for it was often suspended from the shoulders and carried either in front, behind, or at the side.¹ Another suggestion is that it is a breast-plate. And he may be intended for a Jewish high priest representing "the old order." If such were the intention, the dress would obviously be unsuitable, but suitability of vestment did not always trouble the mediæval artist, as it has not troubled many since. But breast-plates were sometimes worn by Christian priests, for in Marriott's *Vestiarium Christianum* there is a drawing of a breast-plate found on a skeleton in a stone coffin in the Church of the Passion, Moscow. It was of leather, and hung by a thong round the neck, and was also fastened round the waist by a girdle. The breast-plate and girdle both had affixed to them numerous metal plates, arranged in bands, and having on them Greek texts and icons, the crucifixion appearing twice.

Many years ago in Dublin I saw some interesting relics of early Irish art, and learnt that the early missionary bishops were believed always to have carried about with them a bell, a book, and a reliquary, as well as their staff. For these things beautiful cases were made, a few of which are preserved. Among these is the Menistir or travelling reliquary of St. Moedoc of Ferns, in its cuir bouilli case. It is called the Breac Moedog (pr. Brack Mogue). They are described and illustrated in *Archæologia*, vol. 43.² These reliquaries were usually house-shaped with vertical walls and

¹ For an excellent contemporary picture of a pilgrim with a branch of holy palm tied to his staff and scrip suspended from his shoulders, see illustration in Clinch's *Old English Churches* of a mural painting in Faversham Church.

² They, however, must be renewals, as they cannot be anything like as old as the 6th century.

pointed roofs, like oratories. There is a late (Limoges, enamelled) metal example in the Mayer Collection, Liverpool Museum. The shrine of St. Boniface in Brixworth Church is similarly shaped in stone. And other examples will come to mind, as, for instance, the one on the Bayeux Tapestry on which Harold takes the oath to William.

That reliquaries were carried about is shown by a passage in Bede. He tells us that the Gaulish Bishops, Germanus of Auxerre and Lupus of Troyes¹, came to Britain² to refute the Pelagian heresy, and after meeting and confounding Pelagius himself, Germanus performed a miracle in making a blind girl see. He says: "Germanus full of the Holy Ghost, invoking the Trinity, took into his hands a casket, containing the relics of the saints, which hung about his neck, and applied it, in the sight of all, to the girl's eyes, which were immediately delivered from the darkness . . ." The portable reliquary of St. Moedoc is $8\frac{1}{4}$ by $3\frac{1}{2}$ by $7\frac{1}{4}$ ins. high, and contained relics brought from Rome by St. Molaise of Devenish and presented to St. Moedoc. The case of beautifully figured cuir bouilli³ has a strap handle forming a loop and attached to each side.

My suggestion is that P.5 has, suspended by its strap handle from his neck, a satchel containing a house-shaped travelling reliquary; that the upper part corresponds to the roof, with overhanging eaves, and the lower part is vertical, covering the upright walls. The measurements confirm this view. The ratio of width to height is as 10 : 8 and of the Breac Moedog is as $8\frac{7}{8}$: $7\frac{1}{4}$

¹ Both afterwards canonised. Germanus is Saint Germain l'Auxerrois of Paris, St. German of Peel, and St. Garmon of Capel Garmon and Llanarmon.

² A.D. 429.

³ Chaucer's "coorbuly."

(10 : 8 = $8\frac{7}{8}$: $7\frac{1}{8}$). I tried also comparisons with the dimensions of the figure, but they could not be made, as the proportions are all wrong. His head, for instance, is 25 per cent. of his height, instead of 15 per cent., as in nature. The width of his chest is nearly twice what it should be for his height. As I have said, mediæval artists did not trouble about exact proportions. They made large the parts to which they wished to draw attention, and here they have somewhat emphasised the reliquary. The large hole in the side of the reliquary I have attributed to a fault in the stone, made larger probably by the school children. It is very tempting, though, to suggest that the hole was first made by the sculptor in imitation of St. Chad's original shrine as described by Bede: "The place of the sepulchre is . . . made like a little house . . . having a hole¹ in the wall, through which those that go thither for devotion usually put their hand and take out some dust, which they put into water and give to sick cattle or men to drink, upon which they are presently eased of their infirmity and restored to health."

P.6 is bearded and, I think, tonsured, but a large part of the top of his head has gone, either broken off when the lock staples were wrenched out or split off by natural processes. He has a short chasuble, very like the little P.1 figure, but he is as tall as P.5, *i.e.*, $16\frac{1}{2}$ ins. Only one vestment is visible worn beneath his chasuble, but there is a suspicion of something pointed hanging over his left leg. It might indicate the hanging pocket we are told Anglo-Saxon and early Norman priests wore. It was later restricted to bishops as the subcingulum, and is

¹ Such holes in shrine walls may still be seen at St. Davids (Pembrokeshire).



THE FIGURES P 7 and 6.



THE FIGURE P 7.

now, I understand, only worn by the Pope on certain solemn occasions. P.6 has his fingers interlocked, and he presses a book against his breast. The fingers are not placed alternately, as is usual, but the middle and ring fingers of the left hand appear between the index and little fingers of the right.

The next to him is P.7. I think he also is bearded and tonsured, but his face is much worn. He has a chasuble over his alb and the point of the former nearly touches the lower edge of the latter. A line of fissure in the stone runs obliquely from the arch near the right side of his head down through his right shoulder to his left knee. He is 16 ins. high. His left arm is bent at the elbow and the hand is brought to his side in front, with the palm turned up, the fingers bent sharply upwards, and the thumb widely separated from them. On the hand rests an oval lump, and on the top of it the right hand lies, palm downwards, with the tips of the fingers only slightly bent. The left end of the oval lump which he carries is rounded and divided off from the rest by a constriction. The right end is irregular and terminates in two small oval pieces, while in front of the middle a V-shaped piece, pointing to the right, is to be distinguished, and the priest's right hand seems to catch hold of its upper end. A tracing of the parts gives the outline seen in the diagram, and I have not the least doubt that what P.7 holds in his hands is an infant. Mr. Roberts takes the "lump" to be the priest's left hand crossed over his right, and what are clearly fingers of the left hand he takes to be the right hand, and so speaks of "folded arms."

Attention may be called to the excessive breadth of this figure in proportion to its height. Indeed, all the figures are disproportionately

broad, but P.7 most of all. It is most likely due to bad spacing, which left the niche too wide, and it had to be filled. Still we must remember, when considering breadth, that in those days there were no fireplaces and no warming of buildings and it is on record that sometimes enormous quantities of clothes were worn. It was said that in life Becket looked stout, but when undressed¹ for burial he was found to be very emaciated.

We have now completed the circuit of the font and have come back to Adam and Eve. If we count the serpent round the tree as one, the font has twelve figures. I divide these into two groups of six. One group, now east, but I should think originally south, facing the south door, has in the centre the Fall and Expulsion from Eden, represented by four figures—Eve, the Serpent, Adam, and the Angel. This group is flanked by a figure on the one side representing the promise of redemption and defeat of Satan, and on the other the way to redemption, through baptism.

While Christianity was gradually replacing paganism, adult baptism was much more usual than that of infants. Children were mostly allowed to grow old enough to answer for themselves. In those early times, too, baptism was performed by the bishop; and except in times of great conversions baptisms were normally done only at fixed times—on Easter Eve and Whitsun Eve. Baptism by parish priests (or their equivalent) in parish churches was legalised only in the middle of the 8th century. Cuthbert archbishop of Canterbury in the year 747 ordered all priests to baptise. But churches and priests were

¹ He had on eight garments, one over the other: *vide* Spence's *History of the Church of England*, ii., 204.

still few and far between, and it was not till the time of Bishop Æthelwald (818-828) that the itinerant clergy, working the diocese from the cathedral of the see, were abolished in Mercia and local arrangements made for the cure of souls. Charlemagne (768) ordered fonts to be set up in all churches having the cure of souls, and all children to be baptised before they were a year old. The English King Edgar, in 960, decreed that baptism must not be delayed beyond 37 days from birth. From the 11th century onwards children were expected to be baptised within a few days of their birth. But it often meant a serious journey. The parish church might be a long way off. The Kirkby baby would have to be carried 6 to 12 miles or more, first by difficult paths through bog and moss, then over the low swampland of the River Alt, often flooded and impassable for weeks together, Next came the bleak and exposed Longmoor, then more clay and mud beside the Tue brook, till finally they climbed the steep hill to Walton. And the ceremony over, all the steps had to be retraced. One can quite understand that parents often did not get their children baptised quite as soon as the priest thought they ought. To relieve the people from this trouble, and even danger, the Kirkby font was made, and one half of the bowl was carved with sculpture setting forth the doctrine of infant baptism, the possibility of which it now brought almost to their doors.

It may be argued that baptism cannot be intended as the priest wears a chasuble. Indeed, in all the representations of baptism I can recall the priest is vested in alb or surplice and stole only, but they are all late examples, and I have

already pointed out that the restricted use of the chasuble was comparatively late.

If we accept this interpretation of this half, the other half becomes, at any rate, symmetrical, consisting of six figures, as follows:—At each wing is a tonsured priest with short chasuble and book in hand (P.1 and P.6). Next to these, on either side, is a figure carrying a long staff, while in the centre stand the two mitred saints with their emblems and the serpents' heads beneath their feet.

The imagery on the walls, windows, screens and elsewhere in the churches were the lantern slides and picture palaces, and more, the very books of the middle ages. By them the doctrines of the Church and the lives of the saints and moral homilies were taught. The people could not read books, but they read into all these symbols what they had been taught from infancy. Winchester font illustrates symbolically the Eucharist and scenes from the life of St. Nicholas of Myra. The Brighton font tells of baptism and the Last Supper, with scenes from the life of the patron saint of the church. The Curdworth font, too, has incidents connected with the dedication. Kirkby font illustrates a subject of Christian doctrine—the reason for and necessity of infant baptism, and, if I am right, the other side is connected with the life of the saint whose name was given to the chapel in which it was placed—St. Chad, the patron also of the diocese in which Kirkby was until 1541. St. Chad, or more correctly Ceadda, was a very popular saint, especially in Mercia. To him its conversion to Christianity was attributed. His life of simple piety and humility seems to have appealed to all. Over 30 churches are dedicated to him, chiefly

in Mercia.¹ The cathedral of the then great Mercian diocese, at Lichfield, contained his shrine, and was dedicated to him, and what is more "the glorious Prince of the Apostles," Peter, had been replaced in the dedication by the simple, meek and lowly Chad, who, when removed from being bishop of York by that masterful Greek, Theodore of Tarsus, archbishop of Canterbury, simply replied that he gladly relinquished it, as he had never felt himself worthy of so high an office, and had only accepted it from obedience. Another evidence of the respect in which Chad was held is that his cross is the chief charge on the arms of the see.

Travellers on the London and North-Western Railway all know that a view of the cathedral of Lichfield, with its three spires, a mile away to the west, is obtained both before and after passing through the cutting in which the Trent Valley station lies. But perhaps some are not aware that just half-way between them and the cathedral is the square tower with corner turret of Stowe church, and beside it in a garden is St. Chad's Well, the water of which flows into one of the pools which add so much to the picturesqueness of the cathedral and its surroundings. St. Chad's Pool (or Stowe Pool), in which, before there was any church or font, he was wont to baptise, has now been enlarged into a reservoir, and the sacred water that used to work miracles is now, I am told, conveyed in pipes to Burton-on-Trent for beer-making.

By the church was Chad's cell, where he hung his clothes on the sunbeam. There he meditated and prayed, there the angels visited him,

¹ When Offa conquered Powys (Shropshire) and took its capital, Pengwern (now Shrewsbury), he gave the site of the palace of the Princes of Powys for a new church to be built in honour of St. Chad.

and the plague seized him, and he died in 672, and beside it he was buried. Bede says: "Chad died on March 2nd, and was first buried by St. Mary's church, but afterwards when the church of the most holy Prince of the Apostles, Peter, was built, his bones were translated to it." This St. Peter's church is supposed to have been the first on the site of the present cathedral, and to have been built by Bishop Headda (691-720), but really nothing is known of it. History is quite a blank for hundreds of years. We do know from recent excavations that whatever it was, it was succeeded by a Norman church, around the foundations of which the present Early English and Decorated cathedral is built. Who built the Norman church is not known, but there is a tradition, or little more, that it was Roger de Clinton (bishop 1129-1148) who "'built it new' in honour of St. Mary and St. Chad." So, as I have already said, St. Chad replaced St. Peter as patron saint of the diocese in the 12th century, apparently a few years before the Kirkby font was made. It may be that among other things the sculpture was intended to record this fact, showing as it does St. Peter standing aside (may I say, approvingly?) while St. Chad gives the blessing. Another possibility has been suggested. It might have reference to the fact that Chad was twice a bishop, once of St. Peter's see of York, and secondly of Lichfield.

I think, however, it is more likely that it refers to the great controversy of Chad's time—the struggle for uniformity in the Christian Church—the throwing over of the rule of St. Columba and the acknowledgment of St. Peter as prince of the Apostles, as Wilfrid put it, or as King Oswy said in a cruder, personal and more interested

way, when as chairman at Whitby he summed up the proceedings of the council: ". . . he is the door-keeper, whom I will not contradict, but will as far as I know and am able, in all ways obey his decrees, lest, when I come to the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven, there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys."

When our font was in the making the great struggle between Henry II. and Becket had not long resulted in the archbishop's murder. Possibly the mason's hand was actually applying his tool to the font while Henry Plantagenet was kneeling in penance at Becket's tomb (1173). When looking at these figures, I fancy I hear the priest discoursing to his flock on the life and example of St. Chad; of what he had done for them in his life and how willing he was always to submit to the authority of mother Church as typified by St. Peter. The figures on either side may have been used to illustrate his missionary tours and monastic life, as attendants with book and reliquary and the staff to indicate they were travellers. At each wing is a shorn priest, shorn as all have been since Bishop Colman and the discomfited Scots retired from the field as what Bede calls a despised sect. These suggestions as to the interpretation I make with much diffidence. They rest on evidence of varied value. Some, I hope, will be considered strong; some is slight. I trust, however, that the paper may call attention to this valuable and interesting relic, and that others better versed in mediæval archæology will be induced to study it and help to solve its many problems and interpret its meaning.