

Notes on a Sanctuary Knocker at St. Nicholas' Church, Gloucester.

On the door of the Church of St. Nicholas' Church is still preserved one of the so-called sanctuary knockers, of which only a few now remain in this country. In a paper on this subject by Miss Bagnall-Oakley, published in the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society, Vol. XIV., p. 131, illustrations of the knockers at Durham Cathedral, All Saints, Pavement, York, Adel, Yorkshire, St. Gregory's, Norwich, and this one at Gloucester are there given. In all these cases are "large" bronze escutcheons representing the head of a gruesome monster "with locks flowing and jaws extended, and in some cases the head "of a man within them. Through the monster's mouth hangs a "massive ring, which in days gone by served as the Hagoday or "Sanctuary Knocker, at which when 'offenders did come and "knocke, streightwaie they were letten in at any time of the "nyght," The interpretation of the example at Gloucester, there given, is however not the one, which seems now to be generally accepted.

Here we have an hexagonal plate, $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches in breadth, each side being $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches, with four cone shaped knobs on each side fixing it into the door. In the centre is the head and part of the body of a large and sinister looking demon, with long flowing hair and ears, bat-shaped wings and hairy forelegs with sharp claws. He holds a large ring $14\frac{5}{8}$ inches in circumference in his mouth, and has on his back the head of an old woman, with her face looking upwards and her extended tongue licking a bunch of grapes hanging above her. In most of the examples the intention seems to have been to portray a subject calculated to terrify and impress the spectator, and here the idea appears to be the punishment meted out to a confirmed inebriate, who is endeavouring to imbibe a final taste of the intoxicating liquor which has led to her ruin.

The escutcheon is made of bronze and with the exception of the ring, which has been added in recent times, is probably of 14th century date.

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KNOCKER ON SOUTH DOOR.