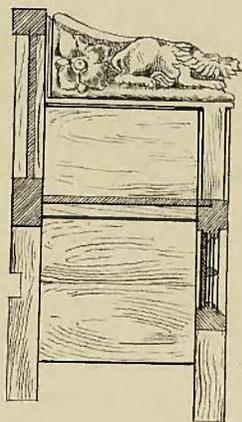
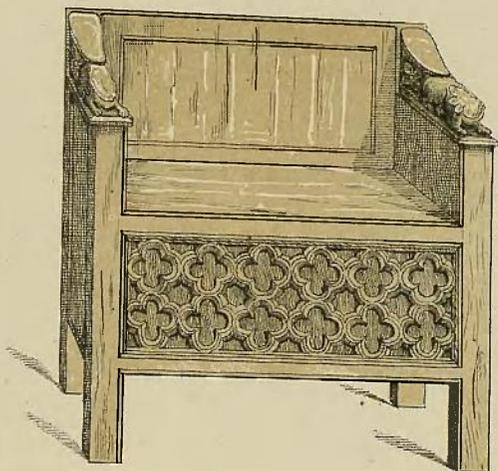


ANCIENT CHAIR, LINCOLN MINSTER.¹

By the REV. PRECENTOR VENABLES.

The fourteenth century work chair here illustrated belongs to Lincoln Minster. For a century or more this interesting relic of the past was stowed away, as a useless encumbrance, in the vestibule of the Cathedral Library. It has now found a more appropriate place in the recently restored Chapter House, for which it is not improbable that it may have been originally constructed. It has been always traditionally known as the "Bishop's Chair," and such may have been its original purpose. A suggestion has, however, been hazarded, which is not undeserving of consideration, that it was made as for a throne for the Sovereign when he presided at one of the meetings of Parliament which were held during the reigns of the three Plantagenet Edwards in Lincoln, and some of them certainly in the Chapter House. The character of the ornamentation coincides with that period. Mr. Pearson places it quite at the beginning of the fourteenth century. It would be interesting if we could thus connect it with the Great Parliament held in Lincoln in 1301, when the Charters were renewed and the claims of Boniface VIII. to arbitrate in the disputed succession to the Scottish throne was indignantly repudiated. But whether constructed for the use of the Bishop or of the King, it is an undoubted example of early fourteenth century upholstery, and apart from any historical interest which may be assigned to it, it is of great value from the rarity of specimens of furniture of that date. It must be confessed that the chair is of very rude not to say clumsy construction, though it is not wanting in a certain dignity in keeping with its purpose. It is simply framed of massive oak, consisting of four stout upright pieces, with a cross

¹ Read at the Monthly Meeting of the Institute, December 4th, 1890.



ANCIENT CHAIR IN LINCOLN CATHEDRAL.

piece at top behind, and others at the level of the seat which rests upon them. There are two arms curving downwards from the back, supporting lions couchant, which it will be seen from the illustration have had their heads and paws grievously mutilated. The outer side of the arms towards the back is ornamented with an eight-leaved expanded flower, with a four-leaved central cup. The front panel below the seat is carved with two horizontal rows of quatrefoils, six in each row. The sides are fitted with plain panels, some portions of which are certainly modern.

The dimensions of the chair are, height back, 3ft. 11in. ; front, 3ft. 3½in. ; up to the seat, 2ft. 5in. ; depth of the back from the seat to the horizontal cross-piece, 1ft. 6½in. ; breadth of seat, 3ft. 2in. ; depth, 1ft. 11in.

The chair has been brutally hacked in several places, and we may well feel thankful that so interesting a relic of antiquity, which has evidently been so little cared for, has escaped complete destruction.