SOME ABNORMAL AND COMPOSITE HUMAN FORMS IN ENGLISH CHURCH ARCHITECTURE.[1]

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The so-called grotesque figures which we see carved in our churches are of two kinds; those exhibiting malformations which would perhaps now be termed 'freaks,' and composite forms both human and animal. Many of the latter seem to be but fanciful combinations copied from illuminated manuscripts, in the margins of which they occur freely; but in certain cases their history may be traced and their presence in church architecture accounted for.

HUMAN PRODIGIES.

Examples of human malformations are not very frequently met with in carvings. They belong to a class known as human prodigies, of which there are descriptions and illustrations in manuscripts, the details being derived from classical writers on natural history. In a bestiary of the thirteenth century in the Westminster chapter library[2] there are illustrations of thirteen of them, and in two other manuscripts of the same class in the Bodleian library[3] and the University library at Cambridge[4] there are similar illustrations, but the details do not all correspond.[5] On the final page of a manuscript[6] at the British Museum, a large folio measuring 21 by 14½ inches, there is a set of seventeen figures, with short descriptive legends, dating from about 1180. These are in outline and nude. Others are illustrated in Cotton MS. Vit. D. i (British Museum) where they are also naked, and on the Mappa Mundi at Hereford (c. 1300) and the Ebstorf map (c. 1284), reproductions of which may be seen at the British Museum.

[1] Read before the Institute, 3rd March, 1915.

[2] MS. 22.

[3] MS. Douce, 88.

[4] MS. Kk, 4, 25.

[5] For the sake of convenience these three manuscripts will be termed the Westminster, Bodleian, and Cambridge manuscripts respectively.

[6] MS. Harl. 2799.

On the first page of the Westminster manuscript (plate 1) there are nine figures, which are as follows :

1. A man with thumb and six fingers.

2. A man pointing to his nose, indicating some abnormal feature, but, as the manuscript is discoloured, the details are indistinct. He is the representative of a people in the far East who have monstrous faces ; some flat all over and without nostrils, or otherwise shapeless ; others with the lower lip so protruded that in the sun's heat they cover the whole face with it when asleep ; and others whose mouths are contracted into so small a hole that they suck up their food with straw-stalks. Others again are said to have no tongues and to exchange communications by a nod or gesture. All these are illustrated in MS. Harl. 2799.

Pliny is the main source for these monstrosities. In his account of Aethiopia[1] he ascribes their formation to the action of heat, saying that ' it is not surprising that towards the extremity of this region men and animals assume a monstrous form, when we consider the changeableness and volubility of fire, the heat of which is the great agent in imparting various forms and shapes to bodies.'

3. A man with four legs and feet.

4. A man with three arms and hands.

5. A man with one hand much larger than the other. These people are clothed in sleeved tunics, and in four cases have a mantle over. They are not defined by name in the text.

6. A naked human figure bending over to indicate that it goes on all fours. It has human hands, but its feet are doubtful. It represents the race called the Artabatitae, a people of Aethiopia, who according to the text walk facing the ground like cattle, and do not live beyond their fortieth year. Pliny[2] says they have four feet and wander about like wild beasts. There is an illustration in the Bodleian manuscript, in which the figure has human hands and feet, and in Harl. 2799, where it has a human head with hat on, and hands, but cloven feet and a tail. De Caumont[3] gives a cut of one

[1] bk. vi, ch. 35 (30).
[2] bk. vi, 35 (30).
[3] *Abecedaire d'Archeologie*, p. 221, 1859.

PLATE I.

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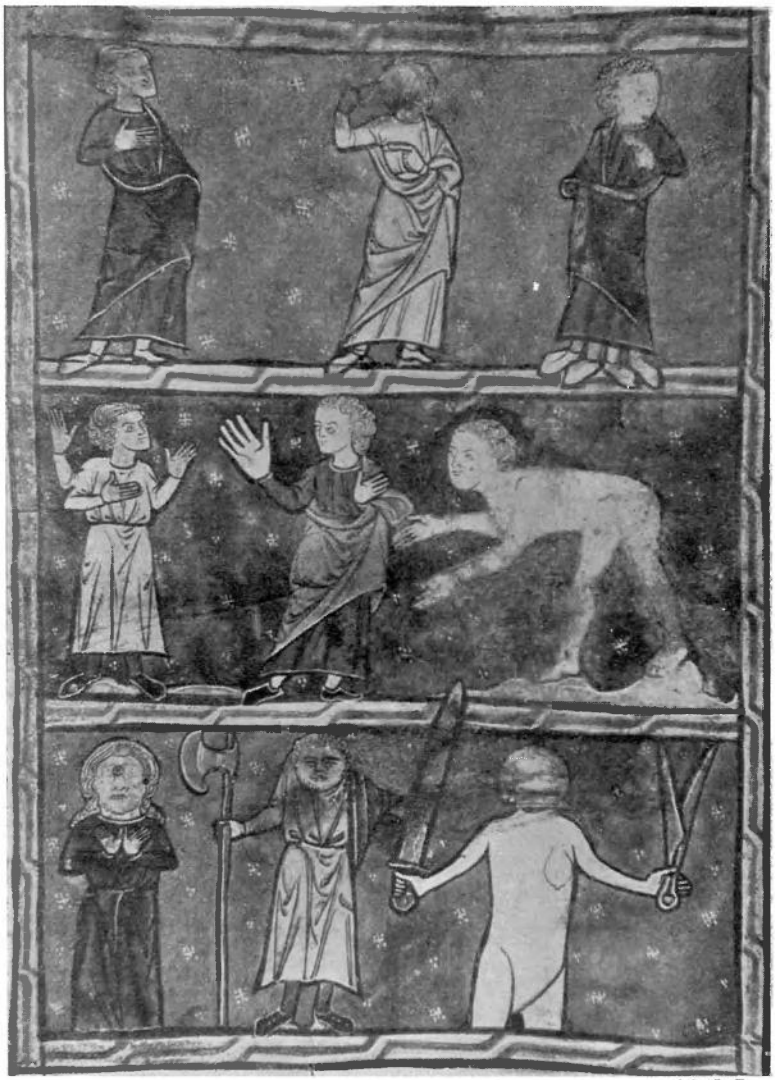

[G. C. D.

HUMAN PRODIGIES: MS. 22, WESTMINSTER CHAPTER LIBRARY.

sculptured on a monument preserved in the church at Souvigny (Allier). It is on all fours and has the fore-feet of a beast and human hind feet.

7. A man in a tunic, with long hair, short beard, and one eye in the middle of his forehead. This is one of the Cyclopes, natives of India, also called the Agriophagitae because they eat the flesh of wild beasts. They are illustrated in both the Bodleian manuscript and Harl. 2799; in the latter the Cyclops holds a small animal and a bird, representing his food.[1]

8. The next figure has his face on his breast, or more exactly in his shoulders. He is dressed in a long tunic and holds an axe and shield. In the Bodleian manuscript there are two such figures, one having an axe and shield and the other a sword and shield. In Harl. 2799 there are also two figures, naked and without weapons, but holding small animals. The texts explain that, while they are the same people, one has no neck and has his eyes in his shoulders, and the other is born without a head, and has his eyes on his breast, which comes to much the same thing. Both kinds also appear on the Hereford map.

These figures represent the race called the Blemyae. Several classical writers describe them, including Herodotus,[2] though he does not mention them by name; Pliny[3] says that they have no heads and that their mouths and eyes are on their breasts; Pomponius Mela[4] the same; and Solinus[5] states that 'they are believed to be born dismembered in the part where the head is' and to have their mouth and eyes in their breasts.

Some of these human prodigies are introduced into the French versions of the Romance of Alexander to illustrate the various monstrous creatures overcome by his prowess.[6] The Blemyae so appear, confronted by Alexander and his knights on horses. The heading is to this effect: 'Comment Alixandres trouva gens

[1] Pliny refers to the Cyclopes eating human flesh in bk. vii, ch. 2. In the same chapter he describes the Arimaspi, who fight the griffins for the gold, as having only one eye, and that in the middle of the forehead.

[2] iv, 191.

[3] bk. v, ch. 8.

[4] *de Situ Orbis*, bk. i, ch. viii.

[5] *Polybistor*, ch. xxxiv.

[6] See MSS. 20 A. v, Harl. 4979, and 19 D. i, of early fourteenth-century date; and 15 E. vi and 20 B. xx of the fifteenth century, all at the British Museum.

sans testes et qui avoient coulour dor et les iex ou pis,'[1] and the text: 'Afterwards they departed thence and crossed a river and landed on an island, where people lived who were six feet high and of the colour of gold. These people were without heads and had their eyes and mouth in the middle of their breast, and the lower part of their body was covered by a beard which reached down to their knees. King Alexander took with him thirty of these men, to show their wonderful appearance to the other peoples of the world.' The illustrations

[*G. C. D.*

FIG. 1. ONE OF THE BLEMYAE. NORWICH CATHEDRAL CHURCH.

show them, three in number, as yellow, naked, headless men with their faces in their chest. In the majority of manuscripts they hold out their hands to the king, but in MS. 20 B. xx they have clubs.

A pair of Blemyae are carved as wing-subjects upon one of the misericords in Norwich cathedral church (fig. 1). Each of them is represented as a headless man, with his face upon his breast. He is dressed in a short sleeved and girdled tunic and boots, and holds a sword. His legs are bent, owing to the desire of the carver to compose his subject in a circular form. Another of these

[1] *Pis=poitrine.* In MS. 20 B. xx they have only one eye each.

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HUMAN PRODIGIES : MS. 22, WESTMINSTER CHAPTER LIBRARY.

figures is carved upon a misericord in Ripon cathedral church; it is naked as in the Romance and holds a large club. Opposite to it is a figure which appears to be a variant. It has neither head nor arms, but wears a cap and veil. Upon one of the misericords from St. Nicholas church, King's Lynn, now preserved in the museum of the Architectural Association at Westminster, there is a pair of them somewhat like the last mentioned, but with tails.

9. A hermaphrodite with the right breast of a man and the left of a woman. The male half holds a sword as befitting a man, the female half shears as suitable for a woman. Pliny[1] calls such beings Androgyni, and quotes Aristotle's description. We have no record of any carvings.

On the second page of the Westminster manuscript four prodigies are illustrated (plate II).

10, 11. In the upper part is a big man with a triple face and one arm, who points to a diminutive figure perched on foliage. The latter holds what appears to be a halberd. They are the giant and the pigmy. The text tells us that the giants are the Macrobii, or the long-lived people, inhabitants of India, and twelve feet high. In the illustration in MS. Harl. 2799, the giant has a single face and hoofed feet; he is also stated to be twelve feet high. This height of twelve feet is a mistake, perhaps originally due to a copyist, but it serves to indicate the immediate source of the text, namely the chapter 'de Portentis' in the seventh book of the *de Universo* of Rabanus Maurus, archbishop of Mainz (? 786–856). He copied largely from Isidore's Etymology and added his own symbolic interpretations. Isidore says that the Macrobii are eight feet high, following Pliny, who gives their height as five cubits and two palms. The pigmies are said to be one cubit in height. They are illustrated both in the Bodleian manuscript and in Harl. 2799; in the latter as a pair of small figures holding clubs and circular embossed shields; one of them has hoofed feet. They are also illustrated in a manuscript of Mandeville at the British Museum.[2] The story of their combats with the cranes is well known.

The fact that the giant has only one arm and a triple

[1] bk. vii, ch. 2.

[2] MS. 17 C. xxxviii.

face is not explained in the text. Rabanus mentions men with an absence or multiplication of limbs, including two heads. He also describes, next after the pigmies, Geryon, the triple man who was slain by Hercules. Whether the triple face can be explained by either of these references is a matter of uncertainty; it may be that the artist combined various features in one figure. There are examples of this triple face or combination of faces in carving on misericords at Cartmel (plate III, no. 1) and Faversham. In the former instance they are under a crown, in the latter a cap. The triple face at Cartmel is bearded, with the hair divided into conventional curls. From either side of the mouth issues a spray of foliage. Various suggestions have been made as to the signification of these faces in architecture, i.e. that they represent the Magi, the Trinity, or Janus, but we know of no documentary evidence bearing on the subject. The presence, however, of such a feature in a manuscript of this kind would be sufficient to account for its occurrence in churches.[1]

Giants are illustrated in Alexander's Romance. In MS. Harl. 4979 Alexander on horseback at the head of his knights fights a party of 'gens qui estoient grans comme jaians' in a forest. These are bearded and clothed in skins, and are armed with large clubs. The foremost is pierced in the neck by Alexander's spear, and several lie on the ground with blood streaming from their faces.[2] In MS. 20 A. v the giants are drawn like Alexander's men in armour, and have swords and shields on which are ugly human faces. The Cyclopes are also treated as giants. They appear as 'clyopes que sont de grant corsage comme iaiant et ont grosse vois et j oeil ou front.' In MS. Harl. 4979 they are drawn as naked bearded men armed with clubs, and have one large eye in the middle of the forehead. The two foremost have fallen, with blood-stained heads. In MS. 20 A. v they are represented as

[1] One of the tales in the *Complaynt of Scotland* (c. 1548–9) is entitled 'The tayl of the reyde eyttyn vitht the thre heydis' (A.-S. *eoten*, a giant): see Robert Laneham's Letter: ed. F. J. Furnivall, 1907.

[2] Upon one of the misericords of the fourteenth century in Gloucester cathedral church a knight on foot with his horse behind him faces a bearded 'giant' in hood and short tunic, who brandishes a large club. The knight strikes him in the neck with his sword. This is usually regarded as a scene from the legend of Valentine and Orson, but it is uncertain. As the giant is close to a tree, the scene may be said to be in a forest.

knights with swords and shields, and have only one eye visible. In MS. 19 D. i they are also drawn as knights like Alexander's men. The foremost has a sword. The artist has apparently made a mistake about the eyes, as they have two, but they are called in the text 'cliopes.' In the later manuscript 15 E. vi they are clothed as orientals in various garments of brilliant colours. A single eye only is visible, but that is not in the middle.

12. Below the giant is the sciapod, a very interesting prodigy. He appears as a naked man with only one leg, which terminates in an enormous foot. He lies on his back on the ground and supports his head upon his left hand. His leg is controlled by his right arm in such a way that the foot covers his head; hence his name of 'sciapod' or 'shadow-foot,' because he uses his foot as an umbrella or shade when lying in the heat of the sun. There is a good illustration in the Bodleian manuscript, in which the sun appears as a striped red and yellow ball, and others in manuscripts at the British Museum, including Harl. 2799, Cotton Vit. D. i, and the manuscript of Mandeville mentioned above; in the two latter the sciapod is holding up his leg and foot with both hands. How he keeps his balance is a problem.[1]

The text of the Westminster manuscript explains that they are inhabitants of Aethiopia, and, though possessed of only one leg, are of marvellous swiftness. We know from Pliny and Solinus, from whom the account came, that their proper name was 'monocoli,' or the one-legged race. Ctesias was the prime source.

An excellent example of the sciapod is carved on a fifteenth-century bench-end at Dennington, Suffolk (plate III, no. 2). He is dressed in a sleeved tunic, and is lying in the same attitude as in the manuscript. His legs are raised, and his feet, which are of enormous size, cover him completely. The carver has made a mistake in giving him two legs. He may have been imperfectly acquainted with the subject or may have worked from an inaccurate picture. There are three little objects under his left arm: they are small human heads

[1] 'In that contree ben folk, that han but o foot: and thei gon so fast that it is marvaylle: and the foot is so large, that it schadewethe alle the body azen the sonne, whanne thei wole lye and reste hem:' Mandeville's Travels; ed. 1725, p. 189.

which have been defaced, as has also the head of the sciapod.

The carving at Dennington is the only one known to us in this country, but de Caumont records and illustrates an example of the twelfth century on a capital at Parize-le-Châtel (Nièvre).[1]

13. On the right of the sciapod in the Westminster manuscript are four little people within a hollow, which is intended for a cave. They gaze towards the open and point with the forefinger as if something important were occurring. In the Bodleian manuscript there are six, and they are also illustrated in the Cambridge manuscript. The texts inform us that they are the Brachmani,[2] part of whom dwell in caves like wild beasts. Pliny calls them Troglodytae, or cave-dwellers. In the Westminster and Bodleian manuscripts there is a quite charming account of their simple life and habits, derived from the Romance of Alexander. It is embodied in the letter which they sent to him, urging that they possessed nothing the desire of which might tempt him to wage war on them. Alexander was so much touched that he refrained from attacking them. At the end of the story there is added a pretty little moral sentiment as follows: 'And perhaps if he had attacked them he would have by no means prevailed, because innocence is not easily overcome, and truth standing fast in its own strength triumphs over wickedness as it were like an armed force.'

In the Westminster manuscript the Brachmani are clothed in tunics and mantles, but in the Romance they are naked. The heading in MS. 20 A. v runs: 'Ci poes vous oir comment li rois Alixandre et son ost troverent hommes et femmes qui aloient tout nu et navoient nule habitation fors en caves et en roces de montaingues.' The illustrations show a party of armed knights on horseback with Alexander at their head approaching a mountain, in the recesses of which are a varying number of the Brachmani as naked men and women. One of them, their king, is crowned. They hold out their hands as if addressing Alexander, and in the two fifteenth-century manuscripts (15 E. vi and 20 B. xx) a letter is being handed to him

[1] *Abecedaire d'Archeologie*, p. 220.

[2] Mod. Brahmins.

In MS. Harl. 4979 Alexander and his knights are unarmed, presumably to show that he was not going to attack them, but this seems to be exceptional.

The three little heads under the arm of the sciapod at Dennington represent the Brachmani (plate III, no. 2); the carver has so disposed them because he had no other convenient space in the panel. Their association affords good evidence that he was working from a manuscript.

In the Bodleian manuscript there are certain figures illustrated which are wanting in the Westminster manuscript, namely:

1. An ape-like figure kneeling on one knee and pointing to the next figure; possibly a wild man.

2. A bearded satyr with hairy body, toed feet and horse-tail holding a club and serpent.

3. A human figure with a horn projecting from his forehead and three toes on his feet holding an object shaped like a sausage. A mask is drawn just below.

4. Another figure with a very long nose and cloven feet. This and the previous figure are naked and may be fauns. In MS. Harl. 2799 the satyr is described as 'satyrus vel faunus,' and has a long slender nose sharply bent up at the end and held in his right hand. This is the artist's rendering of 'aduncis naribus.'

5. A man with ears as large as his face. He represents the Panothii, a people so-called because their ears were so large that they shaded the whole of their body. In MS. Harl. 2799 the ears fall below the knees and fit tightly like a cloak (fig. 2). Pliny says that this is the only covering they have.[1]

6. A figure with three clawed beast's feet; uncertain.

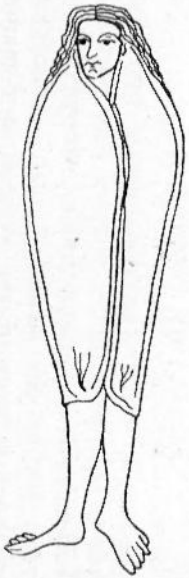
Reference will be made to these at a later stage.

RABANUS ON PRODIGIES.

The account given in the Westminster and Bodleian manuscripts is only part of the chapter 'de Portentis' as given in Isidore's *Etymology* and the *de Universo* of Rabanus, and by reference to the latter[2] we can account for the figures on the first page of the Westminster manuscript

[1] bk. iv, ch. 27.

[2] bk. vii, ch. vii.



PANOTHII.

CYNOCEPHALI.

ANTIPODES.

FIG. 2. REPRESENTATIVES OF MONSTROUS RACES. MS. HARL. 2799 (B.M.).

which are not mentioned in the texts. The chapter also tells us what is the general signification of such prodigies, but does not attach any specific symbolism to each.[1]

Rabanus commences by quoting Varro's statement that 'portenta' (wonders or prodigies) are those creatures which appear to have been born contrary to nature; but, as a theologian, he at once steps in and lays down the law that they are not unnatural, because they came into existence by the divine will, since the will of the Creator is the very essence of everything that is created. All such wonders or prodigies are expressed by the words 'portenta,' 'ostenta,' 'monstra,' or 'prodigia,' because they foretell future events, as the etymology of these words proves. This, he says, is their proper signification, but by the licence of writers it has been generally perverted. Rabanus has here borrowed from Cicero.[2]

Certain kinds of created prodigies, he continues, appear to have been constituted for predicting future events, for God is willing at times to signify future events by the form of creatures misshapen at their birth, as he also does by dreams or oracles, by which he signifies to certain nations or men future disasters, and that is proved by numerous trials. For instance the fox[3] born of a mare certainly foretold to Xerxes that his kingdom would be broken up. To Alexander likewise the monstrous offspring of a woman, the upper parts of its body the parts of a man but dead, the lower parts those of different animals but living, signified his sudden murder; for, he says, the worse elements had outlived the better. But these prodigies, which are given by way of signs, do not live long, but die directly they are born.[4]

He then points out the difference between prodigies and deformities, the former being wholly changed, as is related of a woman in Umbria who gave birth to a serpent[5]; the latter, however, only show a slight change,

[1] Text in Migne, *Patrologia*, vol. cxi, col. 195.

[2] *de Natura deorum*, lib. ii, chap. iii.

[3] Herodotus, vii, 57, a hare: see also Valerius Maximus, lib. i, ch. 6, *de Prodigiis*.

[4] In the manuscript Romances there are miniatures of Alexander holding out this monstrous child for his astronomer to see. In MS. 20 A. v and Harl. 4979 it is drawn as a child as to the upper half, and below as a wild beast having lion-like legs and tail. In MS. 19 D. i it is a diminutive centaur-like creature.

[5] Pliny, bk. vii, ch. 3.

as the man born with six fingers. Other instances are giants, as Tityos, who when lying stretched out covered a space of nine acres; or dwarfs, or those whom the Greeks call Pygmies. Others have certain parts of abnormal size, or a misshapen head, or superfluous limbs, as men with two heads and three hands, or the Cynodontes with their two pairs of projecting teeth. Others again have limbs unequal in size, such as hands or feet, or show the complete absence of some part, as creatures born without a hand or a head; or again where a head or leg is born alone, thanks to Numeria.[1] One or two instances are then given of transformations in part only, as those who have the countenance of a lion or dog, or the head or body of a bull, as the Minotaur to which they say Pasiphae gave birth; and lastly of others, which are wholly transformed into a monstrous creation of a different kind, as the calf born of a woman.

There is another class, namely those who have the position of their organs transposed, as the eyes in the breast or on the forehead, and there is the case of a man who, Aristotle tells us, had his liver on the left side and his spleen on the right. Others have too many fingers on one hand and by some joining-up process too few on the other; and similarly with their toes.[2] Others again who through premature and untimely growth are born with teeth ready formed, or with beards or grey hair. Then there are the hermaphrodites, with the right breast of a man and left of a woman, who beget or bear children in turn. Several of such figures we have seen illustrated in the Westminster manuscript.

At this point the texts of the Westminster and other manuscripts coincide with that of Rabanus so closely that we may take them together. They begin with the statement that as in every people there are said to be abnormal men, so in the whole human race there are monstrous peoples such as giants, dog-headed men, Cyclopes, etc. The origin of giants is discussed, the alternatives being that they were reckoned by the etymology of their name to be born of the earth, because the earth in giving

[1] The goddess of quick birth.

[2] De Caumont illustrates a figure with his legs joined together.

birth to them according to the fable produced them of immense bulk like herself; or that they were the result of the union of the sons of God and the daughters of men, as recorded in Genesis vi, 1–4. The Cynocephali or dog-headed men are then described. They are born in India, and 'their bark betrays them to be beasts rather than men.'

Pliny speaks of the Cynocephali both as apes and men. He says that they are very fierce,[1] and that there is a race of Aethiopian nomads called the Menismini, who live on their milk,[2] which hardly seems compatible. In the very same chapter he alludes to them as a tribe of men who have the heads of dogs, and clothe themselves with the skins of wild beasts. Instead of speaking they bark, and being furnished with claws, they live by hunting and catching birds. Solinus (ch. xxx) describes them as a kind of ape numerous in parts of Aethiopia, and adds that they bite savagely, take tremendous leaps, and cannot be tamed. This passed into the bestiaries, but there do not seem to be any pictures. A Cynocephalus is however illustrated in the manuscript of Mandeville and in Harl. 2799; it is treated as a man, and in the latter manuscript is tailed and is eating a small animal (fig. 2).[3] It is recognised in nature as the baboon. There is a good carving upon a bench-end at Ufford, Suffolk, where it is treated as an ape.

The Cyclopes come next, with a single eye in their foreheads: then the Blemyae; the people in the far East with the strange faces; the Panothii, with the large ears; and the Artabatitae, who walk like cattle. These have already been noticed.

The account proceeds with a description of the Satyrs, who are 'little men with hooked noses, horns on the forehead, and goats' feet, like that one which Saint Anthony saw in the desert, who having been asked by the servant of God what he was, replied: "I am a mortal, one of the

[1] bk. viii, 80 (54).

[2] bk. vii, ch. 2.

[3] In the Romance of Alexander the Cynocephali appear generally as 'les quynosofalis' or 'quynokefailli.' The text says they have 'testes samblables a cheval et dens lons et cors grant et gietant flambe parmi la bouche.' They are drawn as naked men, with heads resembling horses' rather than dogs', and large white boars' tusks (i.e. canine teeth). In MS. Harl. 4979 they are armed with clubs and the foremost is pierced by Alexander's spear.

inhabitants of the desert, whom the pagans, obsessed by a strange delusion, worship as fauns and satyrs." '[1] Then we get a reference to wild men: 'And there are certain men of the woods (silvestres homines) spoken of, whom some people call a race of quasi-fauns.'[2] This is taken from Jerome's Commentary on Isaiah, ch. xiii, 20–22. Then follows a reference to the Hippopodes, a race of Scythia who have a human figure and horses' feet,[3] and the Antipodes in Lybia, who have the soles of their feet turned behind their legs, 'and eight toes on the soles.' The question is discussed why they are so called, namely whether it is due to their feet, or whether to their supposed situation on the opposite side of the earth. The latter is regarded as a fable, and quite impossible on physical grounds. The author seems to have mixed up the description given by Pliny in bk. vii, ch. 2 (taken from Megasthenes), of a race of men who dwelt upon a mountain called Nulo and had their feet turned backward and eight toes on each foot, with the account of the 'Antipodes' in bk. ii, ch. 65. In the latter Pliny makes no mention of the eight toes, but discusses the problem generally as to whether the Antipodes exist; and says that there is a great contest between the learned and the vulgar on the point. Augustine too[4] argues the matter and treats the existence of the Antipodes as a fable, saying that it is not credible that there are men on the opposite side of the earth, where the sun rises when it sets to us, men who walk with their feet the opposite way to ours. Isidore takes the same view,[5] and so it passed through to our manuscripts. There is an illustration of one of them with reversed feet and nine toes in MS. Harl, 2799. He holds a short hammer (fig. 2).[6]

[1] From Jerome's *Life of Saint Paul.*

[2] 'Faunos ficarios,' literally 'fig-tree fauns.' In Andrews' *Dictionary* (1861) it is suggested that the rank growth of the fig is used by Jerome to illustrate the luxuriant habits of fauns; but we have preferred to take *ficarios* as equal to *vicarios;* the words 'faunos' or 'fatuos vicarios' might then be rendered 'quasi-fauns.'

[3] The Hippopodes, according to Pliny, inhabit some islands in the northern ocean (bk. iv, ch. 27) One of them is illustrated in MS. Harl. 2799 playing a fiddle with five strings. Women with horses' feet are illustrated in Alexander's Romance. In MS. 20 A. v and 15 E. vi they are naked; in MS. 19 D. i they are drawn as bearded men in tunics; all have horses' hoofs.

[4] *de Civitate Dei*, bk. xvi, ch. 9.

[5] *Etym.* bk. ix, ch. 2.

[6] Mr. P. M. Johnston has drawn my attention to the sculptures of human monstrosities on the doorway of the narthex of La Madeleine, Vezelay, of which sketches appeared in *The Builder* for December, 1884. Some of the figures have lost their

The account of the sciapod follows, then the Macrobii, the Pigmies, and the Brachmani, all of whom have been dealt with. In Rabanus alone there is a curious item added about the Pigmies, to the effect that the common people call them 'septemcaulinos' or 'seven cabbage men,' because seven of them rest under a single cabbage-leaf. This may be an interpolation.

After a reference to a race of women in India, who bear children at five years of age and do not live beyond eight years, we leave the manuscripts and follow Rabanus alone, who says that we are told of other human prodigies which do not really exist, but are inventions and can be explained by natural causes. For example Geryon, the king of Spain, who is represented with three bodies. For there were three brothers of a nature so harmonious that there was in their three bodies as it were but one soul. The Gorgons too, harlots with snakes for hair, who had between them but one eye, which they used in turn. They were three sisters of a uniform beauty, single-eyed as it were, who so fascinated those who looked at them that they were thought to turn them into stones. We have already remarked on the possibility of the figure with the triple face in the Westminster manuscript being Geryon. The Gorgon sisters are illustrated in the Cambridge manuscript. The miniature shows them seated side by side holding a large eye between them. They have eyes in their heads as well.[1] One of them points to some ugly faces on the border which may perhaps represent those who are turned into stones. The remaining subjects dealt with in the chapter are the Siren, Scylla, Cerberus, Hydra, Chimaera, Minotaur and Centaur.

RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF PRODIGIES.

Rabanus as a theologian naturally seeks to push his argument in a religious sense. He says it should be noted

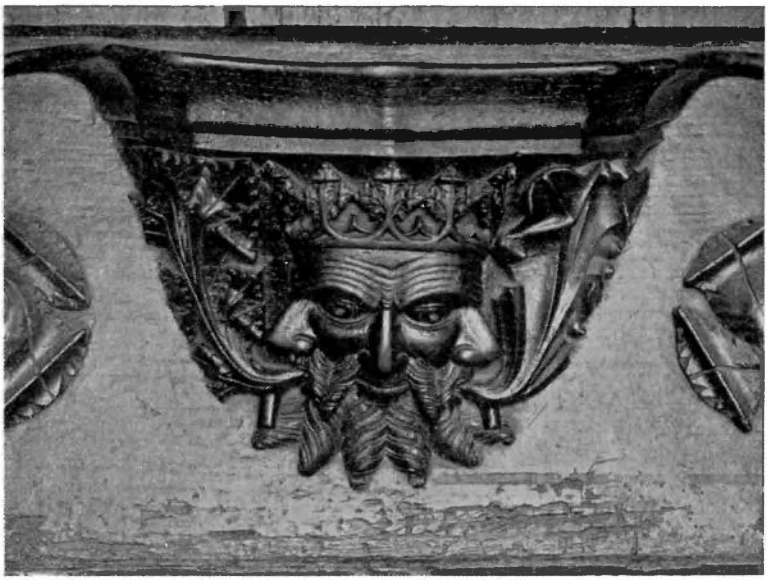
heads, but among them are the Panothii, man, woman and child, with enormous ears; a man and woman with pigs' snouts; two Cynocephali, one of whom holds a sword; and other figures in pairs gesticulating and making signs with their hands, who may perhaps be the people without tongues. There is also a curious sculpture of a man about to mount a horse by means of a ladder set against it, and a group of three men in clogs conversing; they all have clubs. Nearly all these figures are clothed.

[1] The artist here perhaps had the Graeae in mind: they had but one eye between them. No doubt he mixed up two episodes in the legend of Perseus.

that sometimes acts of the prophets are called portents when they predict something about future events, and he quotes the passage in which the Lord addresses Ezekiel as 'Son of man, I have given thee for a sign and portent to the house of Israel'[1]; and how the prophet was commanded to sleep at one time on his right side, and at another on his left, to predict the vengeance of the Lord on the people of Israel.[2] Again Isaiah was commanded to walk naked and barefoot as a sign of the devastation of the country of the Jews and the captivity of Israel.[3] The passage in Joel,[4] repeated in the Acts,[5] is also quoted in full. And then, in his rôle as moralist, he winds up to the effect that it is not necessary for us to discuss more closely the wonders which the books of the heathen narrate; but this we should surely believe, that whatsoever strange things really and truly come into existence and are described as changes from the ordinary course of nature cannot be produced without the planning and will of God, who performs and disposes all things rightly and properly, since 'the Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works.'[6]

Although no specific symbolism is attached to any of the prodigies surveyed by Rabanus, an attempt is made in the Westminster group of manuscripts to give a meaning to some of them. Giants for instance, being larger than the usual size of men, are a type of proud men who like to be especially noticed, as those who make a show as long as you praise them; as it is said of proud Saul, that he was taller by a shoulder and more than all the people. Humility however is shown in David (the pigmy) who was the least of all the brethren. The Cynocephali with heads like dogs typify detractors and quarrelsome persons. The Panothii have big ears for hearing evil. Those who cover themselves with the lower lip are those of whom it is said: 'Let the mischief of their own lips cover them.'[7] As for the remaining kinds the curious reader may write them down more fully either in black or golden letters as he pleases.

[1] Ezek. xii, 6.
[2] Ezek. iv, 4–6.
[3] Is. xx, 2–4.
[4] ii, 28–31.
[5] ii, 17–20.
[6] Ps. cxlv, 17.
[7] Ps. cxl, 9.



[*F. H. Crossley, phot.*

NO. I. TRIPLE FACE: CARTMEL CHURCH.

[*G. C. D.*

NO. 2. SCIAPOD AND BRACHMANI: DENNINGTON CHURCH.

That the early Christian theologians were exercised in mind as to the dangers of belief in these prodigies is evident from the chapter in the *de Civitate Dei* of Augustine,[1] where he discusses the question fully whether certain monstrous races of men spoken of in secular history were derived from the stock of Adam or Noah's sons. He reviews most of the prodigies which we meet again in Rabanus, and advises us that we are not bound to believe all we hear about them. 'But whoever is anywhere born a man. that is, a rational mortal animal, no matter what unusual appearance he presents in colour, movement, sound, nor how peculiar he is in some power, part, or quality of his nature, no Christian can doubt that he springs from that one protoplast. We can distinguish the common human nature from that which is peculiar, and therefore wonderful.'

Isidore was well acquainted with Augustine's writings, for in his description of the Cynocephali he uses the same words; and the very first sentence of the account in the Westminster manuscript accords with that of the second paragraph in Augustine, showing how his views had been passed down.

USE OF THE MANUSCRIPTS BY CARVERS.

From this survey we may well understand that the carvers had abundant justification for employing these figures in ecclesiastical buildings. They no doubt made full use of the miniatures in the manuscripts as models. Many of these monstrous forms are now difficult to find, but it is to be hoped that in time more will be recognised among the enormous number of carvings in stone and wood that we have in our churches. We know that subjects from the Romance of Alexander were deemed suitable, for there are several examples of his flight into the sky on misericords.[2] The companion subject of his descent into the sea in a glass barrel is however not yet recorded. Possibly the former scene was regarded in a symbolic light denied to the latter.

[1] bk. xvi, 8.

[2] Beverley St. Mary, Chester, Darlington, Gloucester, Lincoln. The Lincoln, Chester and two Gloucester examples are illustrated in F. Bond, *Misericords* (1910), 78–80.

THE SATYR.

One of the human prodigies mentioned in the Westminster manuscript is the satyr. Satyrs are described as 'homunciones,' i.e. little men, with hooked noses, horns on the forehead, and goats' feet. They are very difficult to find in mediaeval church sculpture, but there is a good carving of the twelfth century on a cap in the cloisters at Moissac (Tarn-et-Garonne), where it is enclosed in the foliage and bears an axe. We are disposed to think it is here intended for a human monstrosity. The renaissance brought the classical satyr into favour, and examples are numerous on late misericords in French churches, as at Saint-Sernin, Toulouse. There is a good instance in Dordrecht cathedral church, where the stalls date from about 1540; it is holding a dragon.

The only figures approximating in form to the satyr known to us in mediaeval architecture in this country are on misericords at Chichester, one at the cathedral church and the other at St. Mary's hospital. Both date from the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century. In the example at the cathedral (plate IV, no. 1) the figure has a man's bearded face with a somewhat benign expression, human arms and hands, and the body, legs, hoofed feet, and tail of a horse. The arms are raised in a very awkward manner, due to the necessity of composing the subject conveniently under the ledge; and it is holding its tail. It has no horns. The figure at St. Mary's hospital is on the same lines, but has feet with three toes instead of hoofs; it is in the attitude of holding its tail, but the latter is not visible. The identity of these creatures will be discussed shortly.

There is a good reason for the absence of the satyr as such from mediaeval architecture, for it was the model upon which the demon of the West was founded, and it is in this guise that we have it. Take for instance an illustration in the Cotton MS. Nero C. iv (B.M.) of the twelfth century.[1] It is a scene of hell-torments. The demons are of a revolting character. They have the horns, hairy bodies, and tails of the satyr; their feet

[1] Illustrated in *Archaeol. Journ.* lxvii, 302, and *Surrey Arch. Coll.* xxiii, 23.

[*P. M. Johnston, phot.*

NO. I. SATYRUS (?): CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL CHURCH

[*S. Smith, phot.*

NO. 2. SATYRUS: LINCOLN MINSTER.

are either cloven or clawed, and they have snub-noses, a fringe of hair round the face, and grinning mouths. The two principal demons are chopping a man's hands off; others are attending to a cauldron in which a party of souls is being tortured. One of them has fallen out and is being pulled back by a demon with a hook.

Such demons are numerous both in manuscripts and carving. Three of them may be seen upon a tympanum of the twelfth century now preserved in the Yorkshire Philosophical Society's museum at York, where they are engaged in securing the soul of a dying man which is escaping through his mouth (fig. 3).

FIG. 3. DEMONS ON A TYMPANUM:
FROM THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY'S MUSEUM, YORK.

While the bodily form of the demon follows the satyr closely, there is often variety of treatment in the head. In the great painting at Chaldon church, Surrey, c. 1200 in date, there is another hell-torment scene. The three large demons there have almond-shaped eyes, ears erect, and grinning mouths with protruding tongues. They have also hoofed or clawed feet and tails.[1]

This grinning face with tongue out was not a fanciful mode of making the demon appear more repulsive, but was adopted from a classical source. It reproduces the Gorgon's head, or more particularly the head of Medusa. Such heads are common in classical art on shields, coins, etc. and a variety may be seen on antefixes or roof-tiles

[1] Illustrated in *Archaeol. Journ.* lxvi, 325 and *Surrey Arch. Coll.* xxiii, 1.

in the British Museum.[1] They have the features before mentioned: the wide mouth, projecting tongue and hair round the face. Some have fangs, and a minor feature which should be noted is the mark down the middle of the tongue. There was every reason for the adoption of the Gorgon head, for Medusa was one of the inhabitants of Hades. The terrible nature of her appearance is a common theme with the Greek poets, and it was the object of the mediaeval artist to make his demons as terrifying as possible. The masks worn by men at the Bacchanalian festivals

[*S. Smith, phot.*

FIG. 4. HEAD OF DEMON: LINCOLN MINSTER.

were on the same lines, as may be seen on gems.[2] They were dressed to represent satyrs, and had the same grinning mouth, protruding tongue, and horns on the head.

These demon faces are common on misericords and bosses, for which they were suitable as compositions. For instance, upon a misericord at Minster in Thanet both the wing subjects are demon faces of the Medusa type, with ears and fringe, wide mouth and mark upon the tongue.[3] An excellent example may be seen on a boss in the cloisters at Lincoln minster (fig. 4). The demon

[1] Illustrated in *Surrey Arch. Coll.* xxiii, 21.

[2] King, *Antique gems and rings*, pl. xxxi.

[3] Illustrated in *Surrey Arch. Coll.* xxiii, 21.

face is quite typical, and very expressive. There are others at Southwark cathedral church, on bosses piled up in the north transept.[1] On one of them the Medusa type is faithfully portrayed; on another the subject is treated in satirical fashion, for in place of the protruding tongue the artist has represented the skirt and boots of a woman whom the demon is swallowing. The details correspond closely with the two twelfth-century carvings of St. Margaret at Bretforton in Worcestershire and Cotham in Yorkshire, where she is swallowed by a dragon.

Having considered the development of the demon of the West out of the satyr from the point of view of art, we may now see how far it is supported by documentary evidence. Clement of Alexandria[2] alludes to the dramas and poets as intoxicated in Bacchic fashion, and couples them with 'satyrs and the frenzied rabble and the rest of the demon crew.' Jerome associates satyrs and fauns with demons in his commentary on Isaiah, xiii, 21, and xxxiv, 14, in which the prophet predicts the desolation of Babylon. Various creatures frequent the ruins, among them those called 'pilosi.' The passages run: 'Et pilosi saltabunt ibi' (and hairy creatures shall dance there) and 'Et pilosus clamabit alter ad alterum' (and the hairy creature shall call to his fellow). The words 'sa'îr,' 'seîrîm,' in the Hebrew are usual for buck-goats, but are used in Lev. xvii, 7, and 2 Chron. xi, 15, for demon-gods of a semi-human semi-goat form, i.e. the form of a satyr. These gods would be known to the Israelites from their sojourn in Egypt. Jerome comments on the rendering of the first passage by the Septuagint and other translators, and says: 'Hairy creatures shall dance there,' they understand them to be either spirits, or satyrs, or certain men of the woods (silvestres homines) whom some people call quasi-fauns,[3] or kinds of demons. Gregory in his Moralia also discusses the nature of the 'pilosi' thus:

[1] Illustrated in *Surrey Arch. Coll.* xxiii, 21.

[2] *Exhortation to the heathen*, ch. i.

[3] This we have seen repeated in the Westminster manuscript. Jerome also associates satyrs with demons in his account of the meeting of St. Anthony with the satyr in the desert. The latter told Anthony that he and his companions were worshipped as fauns, satyrs, and spirits, whereupon the saint turned toward the city of Alexandria and exclaimed: 'Woe to thee, Alexandria, who worshippest wonders (portenta) instead of God; woe to thee, thou impure city, in which the demons of the whole world are gathered together.'

'Now demons consort with onocentaurs, because malignant spirits are most zealously and willingly devoted to those whom they observe to rejoice over those things which they ought to lament. And so it is suitably added: "And the hairy creature calls to his fellow." For what others are indicated by the name "pilosi" than those creatures which the Greeks call "panas" (fauns) and the Latins "incubos," for their form certainly commences with the human figure, but ends in the lower limbs of a beast.'[1]

FIG. 5. APES AS SATYRS: MS. HARL. 3244 (B.M.)

THE SATYRUS.

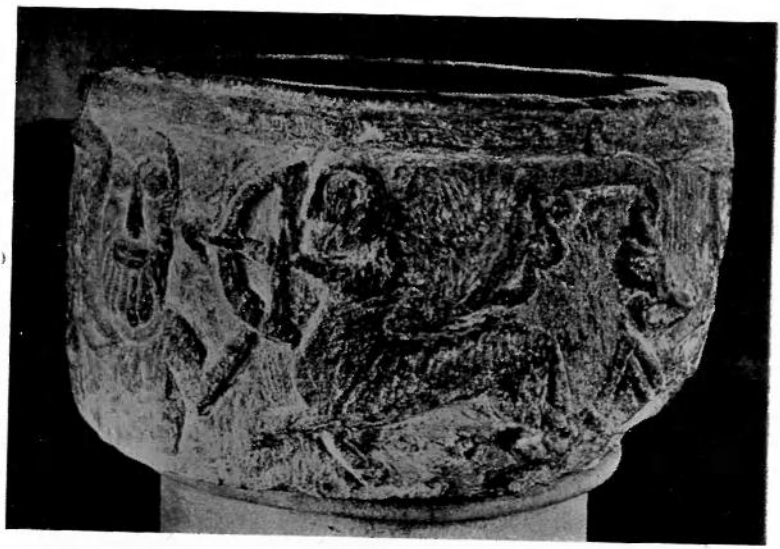
The two figures at Chichester, although resembling satyrs, are certainly not intended for demons. There is nothing repulsive about them. They may either

[1] The onocentaur will be described further on. Delitzsch points out the difficulty of defining the animals in these chapters and says: 'As Rich heard in Bagdad, the ruins are still regarded as a rendezvous for ghosts: *sair*, when contrasted with *attud*, signifies the full-grown shaggy buck-goat; but here *seîrim* is applied to demons in the shape of goats (as in chap. xxxiv, 14). According to the scriptures, the desert is the abode of unclean spirits, and such unclean spirits as the popular belief or mythology pictured to itself were *seirim*. Virgil, like Isaiah, calls them *saltantes satyros*.' And again: 'But the satyrs and the lilith, which were only the offspring of the popular belief, what of them? They too would be there; for in the sense intended by the prophet they were actual devils, which he merely calls by well-known popular names to produce a spectral impression.' (Clark's *Theological Library*, 4th series, vol. xiv, 304, and vol. xv, 73.)

To face page 157.

[*G. C. D.*

NO. I. GREAT APE (?) : WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL CHURCH.



NO. 2. SAGITTARIUS AND SAVAGE MAN : WEST ROUNTON CHURCH.

represent the satyr or faun as a human monstrosity, following the manuscripts, or there is another alternative: they may be apes. This might appear somewhat far-fetched were it not that there is a great ape recorded by classical writers called the 'satyrus.' Pliny, Solinus, and Aelian all tell us about it, and it is also described and illustrated in the bestiaries immediately after the 'simiae,' or common apes. It was called the satyrus because of its supposed likeness in appearance and habits to the classical satyr. As the artists had no other description and did not know what it was like, they drew it as a satyr, in fact so much the same that it is impossible to tell which is which. Thus we see them appearing in the bestiaries as naked bearded men with horns, human or goat legs and feet, and horse tail, holding various objects such as a knobbed staff, suggestive of the thyrsus,[1] a branch,[2] a serpent,[3] a wine cup,[4] axe and shield,[5] or drinking from a cup.[6] MS. Harl. 3244 (B.M.) affords a typical illustration (fig. 5). The heading in this manuscript runs: 'de satiris monstruosis,' showing that the scribe had the satyr in mind. The text is taken from Solinus,[7] where he describes several apes: 'And there are those which they call satyrs, with faces after a manner pleasing, but in gesture and movement restless.' Pliny[8] says: 'In the mountainous districts of the eastern parts of India, in what is called the country of the Catharcludi, we find the satyr, an animal of extraordinary swiftness. These go sometimes on four feet and sometimes walk erect; they have also the features of a human being. On account of their swiftness they are never to be caught except when they are either old or sickly.' Also, that it is very fierce,[9] and again that it stows away food in the pouches of its cheeks, and takes it out piece by piece and eats it.[10] In other passages

[1] MS. Add. 11283 and Harl. 4751 (B.M.); Ashmole, 1511 and Douce, 151 (Bodl.); MS. 61, St. John's Coll. Oxford.

[2] MS. 12 C. xix (B.M.).

[3] Harl. 3244 (B.M.); MS. 178, St. John's Coll.

[4] MS. Bodl. 764.

[5] MS. Harl. 3244.

[6] MS. Harl. 4751. There is a curious illustration in MS. Sloane, 3544 (B.M.). The scribe made a mistake and wrote *equos* instead of *et quos*. The artist was puzzled at this reference to horses, as it did not fit in with his preconceived ideas of satyrs, so he compromised and produced an animal more or less like a horse in motion, with a pair of long horns and the cloven feet of the satyr.

[7] *Polybistor*, ch. xxx, *de Africa*.

[8] bk. vii, ch. 2.

[9] bk. viii, 80 (54).

[10] bk. x, 93 (72).

he alludes to 'men born with long hairy tails and of remarkable swiftness of foot,'[1] which presumably refers to them, and speaks of 'a people in Aethiopia called the Satyri, who beyond their figure have nothing in common with the human race.'[2] Aelian[3] gives an interesting account of their habits: 'When you have crossed the farthest mountains of India, you come to a place of deep valleys, where live animals having the appearance and form of satyrs, with bodies all hairy, and said to be furnished with tails like horses. When they are undisturbed by hunters, they live in the thickets and woods and feed on leaves and fruit; but when they hear the sound of the hunters and barking of the dogs, they run up to the tops of the hills with incredible swiftness, and fight those who follow them by rolling down rocks upon them, by which means many persons have been caught and killed. So they are captured with difficulty, only those being taken which are sick or heavy with young.'

There is a remarkable carving of this creature in a panel of the stalls at Lincoln minster, of late fourteenth-century date, which displays some of the details illustrated in the bestiaries combined with natural features (plate IV, no. 2). It is holding its tail exactly as the figure in Chichester cathedral church. Its form and attitude are sufficiently like a natural ape of the orang-utan class to suggest that the carver had seen one. Yet he was evidently influenced by conventional treatment, for he has given it a wonderful pair of horns, which must have been borrowed from a sheep. In view of the fact that this ape holds its tail it seems likely that the two figures at Chichester are intended for apes.[4]

The satyrus is generally recognised as the orang-utan. In the Malayan language 'orang-utan' means 'wild man of the woods,' and we would venture the opinion that all the creatures known to the ancients as satyrs, fauns, and wild men were originally anthropoid apes of some kind.

[1] bk. vii, ch. 2.

[2] bk. v, ch. 8.

[3] bk. xvi, ch. 21.

[4] At St. Nicholas, King's Lynn, there are four fine poppy-heads enclosing circular panels, in one of which is a bearded and tailed satyr-like ape seated holding a pig on its back by its hind legs. A club lies across its knees.

Apes are common in church carving, and are as a rule naturally drawn. Their form was well known, as they were kept as pets. A great ape was, however, probably a rare visitor. There is a carving upon a misericord in Winchester cathedral church, c. 1300 in date (plate v, no. 1), and others at Edlesborough (Bucks.) and Saint-Marcel, near Argenton-sur-Creuse (Indre), about two hundred years later, which may represent anthropoid apes. An alternative is that they are wild men.[1]

THE SAVAGE MAN.

We may now pass on to consider the 'homo silvestris' or wild man of the woods, of whom there are many carvings in churches. References in classical authors are few and vague in character. Herodotus[2] says that in the western parts of Libya 'there are enormous serpents, and lions, and monsters with dogs' heads, and without heads, who have eyes in their breasts, at least as the Libyans say, and wild men and wild women (*οἱ ἄγριοι ἄνδρες καὶ γυναῖκες ἄγριαι*), and many other wild beasts (which are) not fabulous.'

Pliny[3] speaks of 'silvestres homines' in a country called Abarimon situate in a certain great valley of mount Imaus,[4] with feet turned backward relatively to their legs, and of wonderful velocity. They wander about indiscriminately with the wild beasts. Also in the same chapter, of a nation called the Choromandae which dwell in the woods, that have no proper voice, but screech horribly. Their bodies are covered with hair, their eyes are sea-green, and their teeth are those of a dog. As this follows immediately after an account of the satyr, which

[1] In two manuscripts, Harl. 4751 and Bool. 764, the 'callitriches,' or fine-haired apes, are illustrated in the same panel with the satyrus. Solinus gives a description of them immediately following that of the satyrus, and this is repeated in the bestiaries. The text says that the 'callitriches' are altogether different in appearance; that they have a beard, a bushy tail, and are easy to catch, but difficult to rear; and they cannot live anywhere but in Aethiopia, their native place. The artists have drawn them with a mane of fine hair reaching half-way down the body and with an animal rather than a human face; otherwise they resemble the satyrs. One of these apes appears upon the same bench-end at Ufford church as the cynocephalus, and has a mane of fine hair.

[2] bk. iv, 191.

[3] bk. vii, ch. 2.

[4] The Himalayas.

he calls an animal, it must refer to the Cynocephali, or baboons. There is little doubt that all the above creatures described by Pliny are apes.[1] Later on we have Jerome's opinion that 'silvestres homines' were held to be a kind of faun. Mandeville's description is clearly taken from classical sources and is based on the satyr or faun: 'In that desert (of India) there be many wild men, that be hideous to look upon; for they be horned and speak nought, but they grunt as pigs.'

Despite this association with the satyr or faun, it is certain that the 'homo silvestris' did not follow them in being converted into a demon in ecclesiastical art. In both manuscripts and carvings he bears no resemblance to a demon, but remains a man. This is probably due to the fact that he is not represented in classical art as the satyr is, so far as we know. The nearest approach that we have been able to find is a so-called 'Panno-seilenos' on a lamp of the first century A.D. (B.M.), who appears as a hairy human figure holding a long knobbed staff.

There are two sources from which we get news and illustrations of the savage man in the middle ages, namely from a French bestiary[2] in the Arsenal library, Paris, and manuscripts of Alexander's Romance, both dating from about 1300. In the former he appears as a quite virtuous character, and fights with a centaur. The story is entitled, 'Del sagittaire et del salvage home,' and runs as follows:

> The Natural Philosopher tells us that in one part of the deserts of India there is a race of men who have a horn upon their foreheads and who are savage men. These people make war continually against the Sagittarii, and the Sagittarii against them. These people stay in the tops of the trees of their own will, on account of the wild animals, of which there is 'a great plenty' about them: serpents and dragons, and griffins, and bears, and lions, and all other kinds of vermin. The savage man is quite naked, unless he has at some time or other fought with a lion and killed it, and has clothed himself with the skin of the lion.
>
> The Natural Philosopher says that the Christian man is typified by the Sagittarius, and the soul is typified by the savage man. For the soul makes war always against the body and the body against it. They are always in opposition the one to the other. The soul wishes to be mistress of the body, and the body wishes to be master of the soul, because it is

[1] Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 391, uses the words 'silvestres homines' in its classical sense to indicate uncivilised men or foresters.

[2] MS. 3516.

desirous of the pleasures of the world. What the savage man's flight to the trees for fear of the beasts signifies is the soul which is always peaceable and always shrinks from war, and cries to and loves its creator. As to the savage man fighting with the lion and killing it, and clothing himself with the skin of the lion, this signifies that the soul fights so hard against its body that it conquers it, and that it kills its body and destroys all the vanities and the delights that it is wont to love in the world. So the soul escapes from the hands of its enemy by the grace that God has given it, just as the savage man conquers the lion by grace, and by his courage, and by the endurance with which God has endowed him.

And thou, O man, who livest in sin, despise the world, make confession to the priest, do penance; and believe that God is so merciful that he

FIG. 6. SAGITTARIUS AND SAVAGE MAN: MS. 3516 ARSENAL LIBRARY, PARIS.

receives all those who pray to him for mercy from a good heart and with true repentance and fills them with everlasting joy. He delivers them from their adversaries who seek to destroy them, as he delivers the savage man from the lion.

The miniature shows the savage man with a large horn upon his forehead and clothed in a lion's skin, attacking a centaur with a spear. The centaur shoots an arrow at him; hence his name 'Sagittarius' (fig. 6).

This story occurs in no other existing bestiary that we are acquainted with, but must have been based on one of the earlier Latin or Greek versions, as 'Physiologus' is quoted. The details suggest that the savage man was

derived from the accounts of wild men given in the classical writers already mentioned. He lives in the trees in India, and is associated with wild beasts. His horn is presumably that of the faun and his figure copied from a monstrosity illustrated in a manuscript of the Westminster class. For reasons that will be given presently, it is likely that the centaur here is an ass-centaur and not a horse-centaur.

The scene is represented on the twelfth-century font at West Rounton, Yorkshire, but the composition is crude. The savage man is indicated merely by a bearded head and shoulders, and he holds the bow of the centaur, who points his arrow at him (plate v, no. 2).

FIG. 7. HERCULES AND LION: FROM A LAMP.
From Smith's *Classical Dictionary*, p. 308, ed. 1858.

It is difficult to understand the character of the savage man in this story. He is altogether the opposite of his dissolute confrère, the satyr. It is possible that the author, anxious to find a suitable character to champion the spiritual element in man, was attracted by the primitive nature and habits of the 'homo silvestris,' whether man or ape, and adopted him for his purpose. There are, however, elements in the story which are deserving of notice. The first part is devoted to the savage man's fight with the centaur, the remainder to his fight with the lion. When he has killed the lion, he wears its skin. In both respects we have a close analogy with exploits of

Hercules. He is represented as naked; he fought with the centaurs who were dissolute creatures, and with other monsters or animals, including a lion, and wore its skin. The latter scene appears on lamps and vases. In the illustration from a lamp here reproduced (fig. 7) Hercules has thrown away his club, which is behind him, and is strangling the lion. He has got its head under his right arm, while the lion is clawing his leg. These details are mentioned because in the crypt at Canterbury cathedral church there is a twelfth-century capital which shows the same features (fig. 8). A naked man is fighting a lion.

FIG. 8. SAVAGE MAN (?) AND LION : CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL CHURCH.

The head of the lion is under his right arm, and its paw rests on his leg as before, but its tail is differently composed in order to fill the space on the capital. In place of the club the man has a large tail, the foliated end of which is carried up to balance the end of the lion's tail. The question is, whom does this figure represent? Although it is clearly an adaptation from one of the labours of Hercules, it cannot be intended for him, for he is not directly represented in mediaeval Christian art, so far as we know, and he has no tail, although on some of the Greek vases the tail of his lion's skin hangs in such a way

that it might well be his. The alternatives are that it is either a satyr, ape, or wild man. We know of no instance of a satyr fighting with a lion in church carving, and, as we have seen, the satyr became a demon. Nor can we recall any instance of a great ape fighting with a lion. The savage or wild man is left, but why should he have a tail? The carver perhaps had in mind Pliny's descriptions, and the association of the wild man with the satyrs and fauns, and so gave him a tail; it gave him too the advantage of balancing his composition. If this carving is any guide, it gives colour to the view that the author of the story in the bestiary had Hercules in mind. It might perhaps explain the virtuous character of the savage man, as Hercules was regarded by the Greeks as a hero and a type of manly endurance.

There are other carvings of men fighting with animals which might bear the same signification, as the savage man had so many and varied enemies, but it is difficult to be sure about them. On the twelfth-century font at Darenth, Kent, a nearly naked bearded man armed with a club is seizing a winged dragon. The early misericords at Exeter, Wells, and Chichester do not provide examples, but upon one at Winchester there is a pair of naked men seated in oak foliage with a lion between them. On a later misericord in Henry VII's chapel at Westminster a naked bearded man is contending with a bear, and at Faversham, upon a misericord of the fifteenth century, a naked man armed with a spear and an enormous shield hung by a thong round his neck is fighting a griffin. This shield is worthy of notice: it is composed of a wooden frame covered with hides, and has a large central boss.

THE SAVAGE MAN IN THE ROMANCE OF ALEXANDER.

In addition to the Arsenal bestiary the French versions of Alexander's Romance provide a description and illustrations of the savage man. He is burnt for being a person of no understanding and like a beast. The heading in MS. Harl. 4979 runs thus: 'Coment Alixandres trouva un home sauvage et le fist ardoir pour ce que il navoit point dentendement mais estoit ansi comme une

[*F. H. Crossley, phot.*

NO. I. SAVAGE MAN AND DRAGON : CARLISLE CATHEDRAL CHURCH.

[*F. H. Crossley, phot.*

NO. 2. SAVAGE MAN AND GIRL : WHALLEY CHURCH.

beste.' He is drawn as an immense naked bearded hairy man lying bound to a stake in a fire. An attendant in a tunic is holding him down with a pronged fork, and Alexander and his party of knights look on. In MS. 19 D. i he resembles a hairy ape, and stands in a large fire with hands crossed as if bound. In MS. 20 A. v he is dressed in a tunic, and in no way differs from the attendant who holds him down in the fire; this is due to the artist drawing his figures to a type. In MS. 15 E. vi, of the fifteenth century, he is naked and bearded, but not hairy, and is seated bound to a post in a fire, which is stoked by a man. There is no suggestion in any of the illustrations that he is like a demon.

CHANGE IN TREATMENT OF THE SAVAGE MAN.

So far we have seen the savage man represented in manuscripts and carving as a naked and generally a hairy individual, apparently akin in his origin to the satyr and faun. During the first half of the fourteenth century a change in his appearance took place. He suddenly becomes conventionalised, we may say almost standardised in appearance, and blossoms out into great prominence under his English name of 'wodewose.' Instead of being naked or covered with rough hair, he appears as if clothed in tightly-fitting sheep-skins, and generally bears a knotted branch or club. His earlier form has been noted in the Arsenal bestiary and Romance of Alexander of the beginning of the fourteenth century, and it is also seen in queen Mary's Psalter,[1] of about the same date, where a savage or wild man is being worried by three dogs. He is naked and bearded, and covered with rough hair. On the other hand, in Roy. MS. 10 E. iv (B.M.) a book of Decretals of Gregory IX, also early in the fourteenth century, there are many illustrations of savage or wild men and women as characters in stories, which are all of the later or 'wodewose' type. The time of the change may thus be narrowed down. In MS. 20 B. xx, a fifteenth-century version of Alexander's Romance, in the episode where the savage man is burnt

[1] Roy. MS. 2 B. vii.

and where there can be no question of his identity, he is twice drawn according to the new type, but in 15 E. vi, another manuscript of the Romance of similar date, the old type is retained.[1]

Examples of the savage man or 'wodewose' are numerous, on fonts, corbels, misericords and benches of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He is usually associated with animals, either fighting or controlling them. At Carlisle he is rending a dragon's mouth with both hands and so has no club (plate VI, no. 1); at Lincoln and Boston he fights a lion or griffin and also rides on a chained lion; at Chester a pair of them are astride dragons[2]; at Norwich he holds a pair of lions as it were in leash (plate VII, no. 1); at Ripon he stands in a wood knocking down acorns. These are on misericords. At Burwell, Cambridgeshire, on the wooden cornice of the south aisle he is leading an antelope by a rope. In stone carving, upon a corbel at Tring, his body is partly wreathed and he has a club. In the fifteenth-century churches of the eastern counties he appears in the spandrils of porches, as at Badingham, Parham, Yaxley, Swefling, and Cratfield, the last named being particularly good. The savage man armed with branch or club, in one spandril, faces his opponent, generally a dragon, in the other. In the same districts savage men, alternating with lions, serve as supporters or buttresses to the stems of fifteenth-century octagonal fonts as at Framlingham, Wymondham, Orford, Saxmundham, and Halesworth; at the last named he is bearded and wreathed, and holds a club and small buckler (plate VII, no. 2).[3]

There are a few instances in carving where the 'wodewose' occurs otherwise than associated with animals, but his treatment is the same. In Chester cathedral church upon a misericord there are three of them, apparently in a jovial frame of mind. One is seated upon an unfortunate wight, on whom he is playing a practical joke.

[1] It has been suggested that the 'wodewose' is a different person altogether from the 'savage man,' but we can see no ground for such a view. See a paper by H. D. Ellis on 'The Wodewose in East-Anglian church decoration,' *Journ. Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 1912.

[2] Illustrated by Bond, *Misericords*, 15.

[3] There is a font of this type at Staple, Kent; and a modern version at Hillingdon, Middlesex, with both savage men and women on the stem.

[*G. C. D.*

NO. I. SAVAGE MAN AND LIONS: NORWICH CATHEDRAL CHURCH.

PLATE VII.

To face page 166.

[G. C. D.

NO. 2. SAVAGE MEN AND LIONS: HALESWORTH CHURCH.

At Whalley, Lancashire, the 'wodewose' faces a girl who holds a scroll bearing the legend in Norman French: 'Pensez molte, parlez pou' (plate VI, no. 2). Whether such carvings can be held to show that the wild man of the woods was regarded as a real person, that he waylaid passers by and had dealings with ordinary folk, is difficult to say. It is quite likely that there were solitary dwellers in the forests, and that they were regarded with some degree of awe.

The question arises, what was the cause of this outburst of popularity and change in treatment of the savage man. Upon these points we have no definite evidence to offer. Possible explanations may be either foreign or legendary influence, or use in heraldry. The savage man was an international personage. He appears in painting, c. 1380, in the hall of the Alhambra; on German tapestries; and on caskets. The scenes usually show him attempting to carry off a lady, who is saved by a knight. On the Levesque casket a party of wild men attack ladies in a castle and knights come to the rescue.[1]

The savage man is a character in numerous legends. In the story of Grisandole Merlin the enchanter poses as a stag with a white foot and as a savage man, who interprets the incomprehensible dream of Julius Caesar.[2] In Roy. MS. 10 E. iv and the Taymouth Horae,[3] where several stories are illustrated, there are many figures of savage men and women of the later type, but nothing to throw light on their development.

The influence of heraldry might be expected to count for much, for instance, if the device had been adopted as a badge by some prominent person such as royalty, as was the case with the heraldic antelope. 'Wodewoses' are mentioned in the wardrobe accounts of Edward III in 1348 as having been used by him as an ornament:

> For making three harnesses for the king, two of which were of white velvet, worked with blue garters, and diapered throughout with wodewoses, and the third of cerulean velvet, with lapkin cuissages and hose worked with garters.
>
> For making 'vizards,' twelve of which were men's heads having above

[1] Communicated by Mr. Roger L. Loomis.

[2] See L. A. Paton, *The story of Grisandole*, publications of the Modern Language Association of America, xxii, 2.

[3] MS. 57, Yates Thompson Collection.

them a lion's head, twelve of men's heads surmounted by elephants' heads, twelve of men's heads with bats' wings, twelve of heads of wodewoses, seventeen of virgins' heads, . . . for the king's plays at Otford at Christmas (1348).[1]

If the device had been systematically used by the king as a badge, we should expect it to appear in carving on some building with which he was specially connected, in the way that the antelope appears on the vaulting of Henry V's chapel at Westminster.[2] The savage man became very popular as a supporter for armorial shields,[3] and we find him at the feet of effigies, as at Aldbury (Herts.) on the tomb of Sir Robert Whitingham, who was killed at the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471.

The savage man seems subsequently to have become a popular celebrity, like Robin Hood or Gog and Magog, and appeared in pageants and shows. In a beautiful manuscript of Froissart in the British Museum (MS. Harl. 4380) there is a miniature of four men dressed as savages or wild men of the later type dancing or posturing before the ladies of the court. Their clubs lie on the ground. In Gascoigne's 'Princely Pleasures' and Laneham's Letter we read that when the earl of Leicester entertained queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth castle in 1575, on her return one day from hunting there came out of the woods an 'hombre salvagio,' all covered with moss and ivy and bearing an oaken plant plucked up by the roots, 'who for parsonage, gesture, and vtterauns beside, coountenaunst the matter too very good liking.' He made a speech, and after alluding to reports of many strange things of which he was ignorant, he called upon 'his familiarz & companionz, the fawnz, satyres,[4] nymphs, dryardes, and hamadryades,' who did not however answer; so in his 'vtter grief and extreem refuge' he called upon his old friend Echo 'that he wist would hyde nothing from him, but tell him all if she wear heer.' After such diversions he broke his tree asunder and cast away the

[1] *Archaeologia*, xxxi, 41, 43, 122. We are indebted to Sir William St. J. Hope for these references.

[2] There is no surviving instance of the wodewose at St. Katharine's chapel, Regent's Park, where portraits of Edward III and Philippa are carved upon the stalls.

[3] At Mortain in Normandy upon a misericord, a pair of them are supporting a shield charged with a lion's head.

[4] The connexion between the wodewose and satyr is observed by Caxton in his *Fables of Avian*, xxii (1484), in the passage: 'The wodewose or satyre ledde the pylgrym in to his pytte.'

top in such a way that it nearly fell on the head of the queen's horse, which became restive and caused the company an anxious moment. Savages or 'green men' are recorded as taking part in the lord mayor's show in the eighteenth century, and letting off fireworks to keep the people back.[1]

THE SIREN AND THE CENTAUR.

There are two subjects remaining to be dealt with, the siren and the centaur. They occur freely in church architecture. Both are human composites, and are thus included among the prodigies in the chapter 'de Portentis' of Rabanus. They go hand in hand in the bestiaries as symbolic subjects owing to the author having made use of the Septuagint version of Isaiah, xiii, 21–22, and xxxiv, 11–14, where they are associated in the passages in which the prophet predicts the desolation of Babylon.[2]

THE BIRD-SIREN.

Jerome in his commentary discusses the nature of the 'sirenae' in Isaiah thus: 'The sirens which are called in the Hebrew Thennim we understand to be either demons, or a kind of monster, or at least great dragons which are crested and fly; by all of these creatures the signs of devastation and solitude are indicated.'[3] He does not apparently refer here to the classical siren. Possibly he had in mind certain serpents with a similar name, said to exist in Arabia. These 'syrenae' are described and illustrated in the Latin bestiaries. They are drawn as winged dragons and sometimes have horns, as in MSS. 12 C. xix and Sloane 3544 (B.M.).

Jerome's definition of sirens was not adopted by the

[1] About 1762: see *New English Dictionary*, under 'savage.'

[2] The siren and centaur are associated in the Greek bestiary, described and illustrated by J. Strzygowski, *Der Bilderkreis des griechischen Physiologus*, 1899.

[3] *Commentary on Isaiah*, lib. v, ch. xiv.

later commentators, such as Isidore and Rabanus. They took for granted that the 'sirenes' of the Vulgate were the creatures inhabiting the sea with which they were familiar in classical art, and the bestiary-writers followed them.

The texts of the early Latin bestiaries, represented by MS. 10074 of the tenth century at Brussels, commence with the quotation from Isaiah thus:

> Isaiah the prophet says: 'Sirens and demons shall dance in Babylon,[1] and hedgehogs and onocentaurs shall dwell in their houses.' The Natural Philosopher discourses on the nature of each. The sirens, he says, are death-dealing animals which from the head down to the waist have a human form[2] but the lower parts to the feet have the form of birds. And they sing a certain musical and most sweetly melodious song; so that by the charm of their voice they enchant the ears of men who are sailing a long way off, and draw them to them, and seduce their ears and senses by the extraordinary rhythm and sweetness (of their song) and lull them to sleep. Then at length when they see them sunk in a deep sleep, they suddenly attack them and tear their flesh in pieces, and thus by the influence of their voice they deceive ignorant and careless men and do them to death.
>
> Thus then are deceived those who find their enjoyments in the delights and pomps (of this world) and in theatres and other pleasures, that is, who are enervated with the comedies and tragedies and different kinds of musical tunes; and as though in a deep sleep, lose all the vigour of their minds; and suddenly become a prey to the power of their most greedy adversaries.

The part which follows about the onocentaur will be given presently. In the miniature accompanying this account the three sirens are drawn in semi-bird form (plate VIII, no. 1). Two of them are tearing the unfortunate sailor to pieces with their claw-like fingers, while the third plays a musical instrument resembling a citole. There are two legends above: 'Ubi syrene musica sonant ad decipiendos homines,' and: 'Ubi dilaniant eos jam mortuos.'

The sirens of the bestiary were of course derived from a classical source, the story of Ulysses. On the well-known vase at the British Museum they are in the form of birds.[3] There is little to be learnt about their appearance from

[1] *babylone*, but MS. 233 at Berne reads *habitatione*.

[2] *hominis* = a human being, but practically all versions say 'of a woman.'

[3] For an account of the siren in Greek art, see article by Miss Jane Harrison, 'The Myth of Odysseus and the Sirens,' in *The Magazine of Art*, Feb. 1887.

NO. I. BIRD-SIRENS : MS. 10074, BIBL. ROY. BRUSSELS.

NO. 2. BIRD AND FISH SIRENS : MS. 3516, ARSENAL LIBRARY, PARIS.

classical writers, most of the references being to their place of abode, but Ovid[1] describes them as 'having feathers and the feet of birds and faces of maidens.' Pliny[2] includes them with the fabulous birds and has but little to say in their favour: 'Nor yet do the sirens obtain any greater credit with me, although Dinon, the father of Clearchus, asserts that they exist in India and that they charm men by their song; and having first lulled them to sleep, tear them to pieces.'

The symbolism of the siren from the Christian point of view is clearly expressed by Clement of Alexandria,[3] who says:

> Let us avoid custom as we would a dangerous headland, or the threatening Charybdis, or the mythical sirens. . . . Urge the ship beyond that smoke and billow.[4] . . . Let us shun, fellow mariners, let us shun this billow; it vomits forth fire; it is a wicked island, heaped with bones and corpses, and in it sings a fair courtesan, Pleasure, delighting with music for the common ear. . . . Let not a woman with flowing train cheat you of your senses. . . . Sail past the song; it works death; exert your will, and you have overcome ruin; bound to the wood of the Cross, you shall be freed from destruction. The Word of God will be your pilot, and the Holy Spirit will bring you to anchor in the haven of heaven.[5]

In the early twelfth-century bestiary of Philip de Thaun,[6] the siren is described as having the form of a woman down to the waist, the feet of a falcon, and the tail of a fish. In this version sirens symbolise the riches of the world, and the evils which arise out of them:

> Seraines ki sunt richeises sunt del mund;
> La mer mustre cest mund, la nef gent ki i sunt,
> E laneme est notuner, e la nef cors que dait nager;
> Sacez maintes faiez funt li riche ki sunt el mund
> Lanme el cors pecher, . . .

The metrical version of Guillaume made in the thirteenth century says that the siren has a very strange shape: 'For from the waist upwards it is the most beautiful thing in the world, formed in the guise of a woman; and

[1] *Met.* v, 552.
[2] bk. x, ch. 70 (49).
[3] *Exhortation to the Heathen*, ch. xii.
[4] *Odys.* xii, 226.
[5] *Ante-Nicene lib.* vol. iv, p. 106.
[6] Cotton. MS. Nero A. v (B.M.).

the other parts are shaped like a fish and like a bird.' The sirens are a type of the delights of the world, 'luxury, gluttony, drunkenness, women and sleek horses, and rich clothes,' to which we are inclined. 'There is however many a mariner who knows how to keep guard and watch when he goes sailing on the sea; he stops up his ears, so that he does not hear the siren's song. Just the same should the wise man do, who passes through the world; he should keep himself chaste, and his ears and eyes from hearing and seeing anything that may bring him into sin.'

In the thirteenth-century poem of Gautier de Metz, *L'Image du monde*, the siren is described thus: 'Others there are with heads and bodies of maidens as far as the breasts, below as fish, and with the wings of birds; and their song is very sweet and beautiful.'

There are a few instances in manuscripts of sirens in this triple form. In MS. Kk. 4-25 in the university library, Cambridge, one of the three has bird's wings and feet, and a fish tail. In MS. Douce 88 (first bestiary) the siren has large bird's wings and claws, but the feathered lower body and tail resemble the hind part of a fish.[1] In Harl. 3244, and other manuscripts, although in fish form, she has wings.

There are many illustrations of the bird-siren in the bestiaries. In MS. Bodl. 602 there are three. One of them has webbed feet and holds up her hands; the other two play triple pipes and harp. In MS. Douce 88 there are two miniatures. The first shows four men in a boat; one man is rowing and two of the others point to three sirens of semi-bird form floating in the water. These hold out their hands and are evidently singing. In the second they hold up their hands and play double pipes and harp. This gesture of holding up the hands may be a signal to the sailors. In MS. 1444 Français (Bibl. Nat. Paris), Guillaume's version, there are two men in the ship and two sirens in bird form. One raises her pipe or horn as if to strike the ship, the other plays a harp. In the Bestiaire d'Amour in the same manuscript there are three scenes. In the third there are

[1] Bird-sirens with tails approximating to those of fish may be seen on vases in the second vase-room at the British Museum.

To face page 173.

[*F. H. Crossley, phot.*

NO. I. BIRD AND FISH SIREN : CARLISLE CATHEDRAL CHURCH.

[*G. C. D.*

NO. 2. SIRENS : EXETER CATHEDRAL CHURCH.

three men rowing, and at either end of the ship a siren is hitting a man on the head with her horn.

Examples of the triple form, or in fact of any bird form of siren, are very scarce in carving. We can only recall two instances in this country, namely at Carlisle and All Saints', Hereford, both on misericords. In the Carlisle example (plate IX, no. 1) the siren has the feathered body and feet of a bird and the tail of a fish. Her right hand is broken off, but it probably held a comb as she has a mirror in her left. At Hereford there are two, each of whom holds a (?) stick. They also have feathered bodies, birds' feet, and fish tails, but their tails appear to be covered with feathers rather than scales. In carving, tips of feathers and scales are often much alike.

There is an exceptional detail in MS. Douce 132 (Bodl.) and MS. 178 (St. John's College, Oxford,) where the siren grasps a dragon. In each case she is in bird form, and in the first has human feet. The dragon's head appears over her left shoulder, its body and twisted tail falling behind. The origin of this feature is unknown to us, but it is presumably based on a classical model.[1]

In a few miniatures the sirens are mixed. In queen Mary's Psalter there are two scenes: in the first there are two sirens, one of whom is in bird form and holds up her hands, and the other is in fish form and holds a mirror. The ship appears with four men in it, two of whom are overcome with sleep. In the second scene the sirens bend over the side of the ship and seize the sleeping men.

In the French prose bestiary in the Arsenal library, Paris, there are three sirens, one in bird form and flying, the other two in the water (plate VIII, no. 2). The form of the latter is not very clear, but they are probably intended to be semi-fish. The first blows a horn, the second plays a harp, and the third sings. The text of this manuscript commences with the same quotation from Isaiah, and then says that there are three kinds of sirens, of whom two are partly woman partly fish, and the third partly woman partly

[1] At Saint-Sernin, Toulouse, upon a sixteenth-century misericord the siren holds a serpent.

bird; and they all three sing, les unes en buisines[1] et les autres en harpes et les autres en droite vois.' The account does not differ materially from the Latin manuscripts, but the phraseology is varied. The melody of the sirens' song is so pleasing that however far off the sailors are they cannot help coming. It makes them so forgetful that when they are drawn there, they fall asleep, and so are attacked and killed treacherously, because they have not been on their guard. The sirens are a type of those women who by their blandishments and deceits attract men to themselves and bring them to poverty and death. And the moralist winds up sententiously with: 'Like the wings of the siren is the love of woman, which goes and comes quickly.'

As regards the musical instruments Isidore was probably followed, as he is a good deal quoted in the French versions. In his *Etymology* (lib. xi, ch. iii) he repeats the passage in the commentary of Servius on the *Aeneid*, v. 864, to the effect that 'the three sirens are represented to have been partly women, partly birds, having wings and claws; of whom one sang, another played on the pipes, and the third on the lyre. . . . They are depicted as having wings and claws, because love both flies and wounds. And for this reason they are said to have dwelt in the waves, because the waves gave birth to Venus.' This last passage is repeated in MS. Bodl. 602.

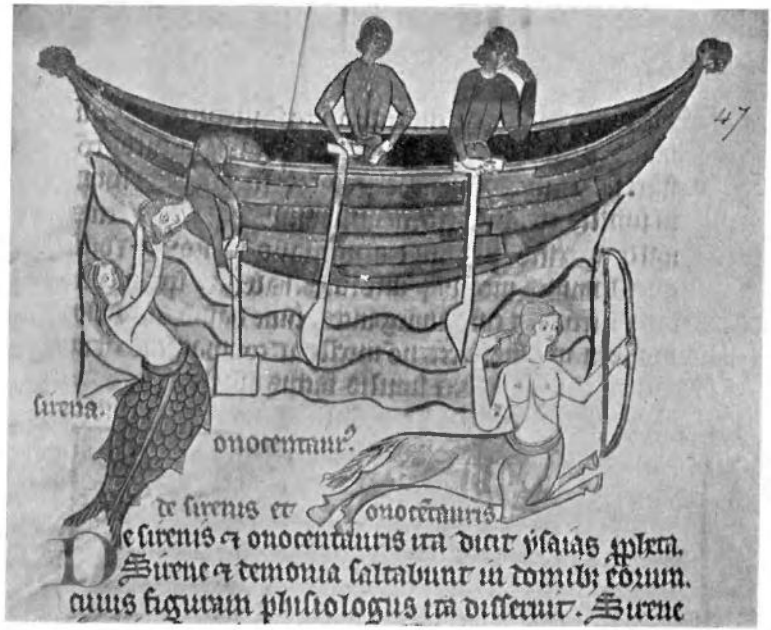
THE FISH-SIREN.

The siren in fish form, usually termed the mermaid, is extremely common both in manuscripts and carving. It also came from a classical source, being based on the female triton. In the gallery of casts at the British Museum there is a mosaic pavement from a Roman villa at Halicarnassus, probably of the third century A.D. It shows Venus rising from the sea supported by a pair of female

[1] For an account of this instrument see the article by Miss E. K. Prideaux on 'Mediaeval Musical Instruments in Exeter Cathedral,' page 20 in this vol.

PLATE X.

NO. 1. FISH-SIREN : MS. HARL. 4751 (B.M.)



NO. 2. SIREN AND ONOCENTAUR : MS. SLOANE 278 (B.M.)

To face page 175.

tritons or mermaids, who have curled fish tails. Venus holds a mirror in one hand, her locks in the other. This scene accords with Isidore's statement; and the mirror in the hand of Venus is likely to have been the forerunner of the numerous mirrors seen in the hands of mermaids.

The siren in fish form is illustrated in many manuscripts. In MSS. Add. 11283 and Harl. 3244 she holds a fish; in MS. Sloane 3544 and MS. 14969 Français (Bibl. Nat.) two fish; in MS. Bodl. 764, where there are three sirens, one holds a fish and the other two the ship; in MSS. Douce 151 and Ashmole 1511 they each hold a double comb and fish; and in MS. 14970 Français the siren is blowing a long horn. In MS. Harl. 4751 she hovers above the ship and holds its prow and a fish (plate x, no. 1); the mast and sail have fallen overboard and the vessel appears to be sinking. One sailor is rowing or steering, and another is standing stopping up his ears with his fingers, in accordance with the legend. In MS. Sloane 278 (B.M.) the vessel has neither mast nor sail (plate x, no. 2). There are three sailors, all of whom are rowing or steering with crutch-headed oars. One of them, who is standing, holds his hand to his ear as before, while the third is being dragged overboard by the hair by the siren. In MS. Sloane 3544 the sailors are asleep in the ship with their heads resting on their hands.

Sirens are also made use of in Alexander's Romance to illustrate 'women who always live in the water; and who, when they see people coming, retire into the water so that they cannot be seen in any way.' In MS. 20 A. v there are three of them of semi-fish form dressed in tunics. They look at and hold out their hands towards two knights standing on the bank. This behaviour, while compatible with the character of sirens, hardly accords with the professions of the ladies in the Romance.

The earliest example of the siren known to us in church architecture is on a capital of the eleventh century in the chapel at Durham castle (fig. 9). It is rudely incised and shows her in fish form holding up her hands as in the manuscripts. She is in the same attitude on the twelfth-century tympanum at Stow Longa, Huntingdonshire, and abroad on the west doorway at Loches. We

have seen that this gesture is especially associated with the siren who sings, but the carvers were no doubt not particular. In stone carving at Barfreston, Kent, the siren holds a fish; at Nately Scures, Hants, and at the church of Saint-Michel d'Aiguilhe, Le Puy, her tresses.

In woodwork, there are three sirens of the thirteenth century on misericords at Exeter cathedral church. They are in fish form, and in one case a pair of them, symmetrically arranged, are beating a tabor over a mask-like head below (plate IX, no. 2). The latter may be intended for the

FIG. 9. SIREN : DURHAM CASTLE CHAPEL.

head of the sailor, but if it should be regarded merely as a mask, perhaps it denotes the comedies and tragedies mentioned in the bestiaries. In the other case the siren holds a fish. Their tails terminate in foliage. Examples in later woodwork are so numerous that it is difficult to select them for mention. On a misericord of the fourteenth century at Gloucester cathedral church there is a fine siren supporting a fish with either hand. In the fifteenth century the mirror is commonly balanced by a double comb, but the siren frequently holds her locks. A late example in an unusual setting of rocks and trees may be seen on the north side of Henry VII's chapel, Westminster.[1]

[1] Illustrated in Bond, *Misericords*, 11.

The ship is very scarce in carving, and we can only recall one instance, namely, upon a misericord at Boston (plate xi, no. 1). It is a simple boat. There are two sailors, both of whom appear to be asleep, although one holds an oar. On the right is the siren, in fish form, playing a pipe. It is very rare for her to be playing any musical instrument in carving.

An interesting variant may occasionally be found, namely, where she has a double fish-tail. The finest example of this type is at Cartmel (plate xi, no. 2). The details indicate that the carver was a person of some originality or had an unusual model to work from, for he has composed his siren as a garish female with long and wavy hair, that on her left hand being plaited, and that on her right loose. She holds an ornamental comb with fine and coarse teeth,[1] and a mirror with richly-chased rim. Her divided tail was adopted from a classical source, either the triton or Scylla, and is more common on the continent than here, especially as a heraldic device. There are good instances upon a sculptured stone of the twelfth century at the priory of Sainte-Enimie (Lozère) on the Tarn, and on a misericord of the sixteenth century at Saint-Sernin, Toulouse. It is suitable as a corner composition, and appears in this way on the fonts at St. Peter's, Cambridge, and Anstey, Herts.

There are three examples of a siren suckling a lion, on misericords at Wells, Norwich (plate xii, no. 1), and Edlesborough, Bucks. So far we have been unable to ascertain the source and meaning of this feature. In Lincoln minster, there is a misericord with a siren in the centre holding a mirror and comb, and a lion on either side of her, which may possibly be another form of it.

THE MERMAN OR TRITON.

The merman or triton is sometimes met with in churches. At Long Marton, Westmorland, he appears on a tympanum of the twelfth century, in company with a

[1] French boxwood combs of this kind of the fifteenth century may be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum (room 5).

dragon.[1] The finest example we have in wood-carving is upon a misericord at St. Mary's hospital, Chichester (plate XII, no. 2), where he is hooded and holds his fish-tail. He does not seem to be described in the bestiaries, but is illustrated in Alexander's Romance. In MS. 20 A. v he appears in the sea in company with the mermaid in the scene where Alexander descends in a glass barrel, and in another scene where men and women are mentioned who live in water. In two cases at least the merman and mermaid occur together on misericords; at Winchester they balance each other as wing subjects, and at Stratford-on-Avon they are side by side in the centre. Abroad both at Loches and Remagen[2] they are found together in twelfth-century work. They are common in heraldry and may be seen as supporters in armorial glass at Brasted, Kent.

THE ONOCENTAUR.

We must now consider the centaur. It has already been pointed out that, in the form of the onocentaur, it was associated with the siren in the bestiaries through the author making use of the Septuagint rendering of Isaiah, xiii, 21–22, and xxxiv, 11–14. Jerome tells us that the Septuagint alone translated the Hebrew word as ὀνοκένταυροι, but that Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotius, as well as he himself, favoured the rendering *ululae*, which appears in the Vulgate. The word *onocentauri*, however, is retained in the Vulgate in Isaiah, xxxiv, 14. Jerome adds that when the Septuagint rendered the Hebrew word as onocentaur, 'they copied the fables of the heathen, who say that there were hippocentaurs.'[3] The name of 'onocentaur' would imply that the creature was a compound of the ass, but in its origin it was not so. It must not be confounded in ecclesiastical art with the hippocentaur, which was drawn from a different source and has a different symbolic meaning.

[1] Allen, *Christian Symbolism*, p. 369.

[2] *Das Portal zu Remagen.* Proceedings of the Verein von Alterthumsfreunden in den Rheinlanden, Bonn, 1859.

[3] Commentary on Isaiah, lib. v.

[*A. Gardner, phot.*

NO. 1. SIREN: BOSTON CHURCH.

[*F. H. Crossley, phot.*

NO. 2. SIREN WITH DOUBLE TAIL: CARTMEL CHURCH.

The onocentaur has a curious history. How did the Septuagint come to use such a word in the passages in Isaiah, and what did they mean by it? For this we must turn to Aelian's description of the creature,[1] the only one that we have in classical authors. He says:

> There is an animal which they call 'onocentaur,' and whoever sees it regards as by no means incredible what has been circulated about it in story, namely that there are nations of centaurs, and that neither those who have carved or painted it have been false in their descriptions; nor will he deny that such creatures have been produced by lapse of time, and that two bodies of diverse natures have coalesced into one. But whether they really existed, or whether hearsay, more flexible and more skilful for fashioning anything than any wax, has fashioned them with two bodies commingled, one half of a man and the other of a horse, and with one soul for the harmonised bodies, I will not discuss.
>
> Now about the onocentaur I have it in my mind to explain those things that I have collected in conversation and by report, namely that it is like a man in the face; and that its face is surrounded with long hair; its neck and chest have a likeness to those of a human being; its breasts project in front; its shoulders, arms, elbows, and hands, and its chest down to the loins are of human form; its back, flanks, belly, and hind feet resemble an ass, and it is of a grey colour as an ass, but under the belly (at the flanks) it approaches to white. Their hands display a double use, for when there is need of swiftness, they use them as forefeet to run; and so it comes about that it is not surpassed in speed by other quadrupeds; and again when it is necessary for it to take food or pick up anything, lay it down, or seize or gather anything together which may be in front of its feet, they become hands again; and then it does not move, but sits down. It is an animal of a hard and bitter spirit, for if it is caught, it does not endure captivity, but the desire for freedom causes it to refuse all food, and prefer death by hunger. It is Crates of Pergamum in Mysia who says that Pythagoras narrates this about the onocentaur.

There is no doubt that the creature here described is an anthropoid ape, and that its 'likeness to a man in the face,' and to an ass in colour and body when on all fours, caused it to receive the name of ass-centaur, following the example of the hippo-centaur. The Septuagint doubtless knew of the description in Pythagoras and employed the word in its true sense to indicate an ape, or a demon like an ape, a suitable creature to haunt the ruins of Babylon. The name of onocentaur was however too near that of the better known hippo-

[1] bk. xvii, ch. 9.

centaur to escape misunderstanding, and it came to be regarded as a similar kind of creature. Jerome accepts it as such and gives it the following symbolic interpretation: 'Furthermore the name of onocentaur, being composed of asses and centaurs, appears to me to signify those people, who on the one hand are possessed of human intelligence, and on the other are drawn away by illicit pleasures and filthy lust to (all kinds of) vices.'[1]

Gregory, in his 'Moralia,'[2] commenting on Isaiah, xxxiv, 14, takes the onocentaur for granted, but sadly twists its etymology. He says:

> But what are signified by the name of ass-centaurs other than deceitful persons and proud? In the Greek language certainly ὄνος is the name for ass, and by the name of ass vice is indicated, as the prophet testifies who says: 'Their flesh is as the flesh of asses' (Ezek. xxiii, 20). Now by the name of bull (taurus) the neck of pride is understood; as it is told by the voice of the Lord about the pride of the Jews through the Psalmist: 'Fat bulls have beset me' (Ps. xxii, 12). Ass-centaurs then are those persons who are given up to the vices of luxury and so lift up their neck (in pride) when they ought to have bowed their head. And these being subservient to the pleasures of their flesh, all feeling of shame having been banished, not only do not grieve for the loss of all uprightness, but go so far as to rejoice over the work of deception.[3]

This collective view of the onocentaur passed into the bestiaries. In the early manuscript at Brussels, from which the part about the siren has already been given, the onocentaur is described thus:

> Similarly the Natural Philosopher asserts that the onocentaur possesses a double nature, that is the upper part of it is like a man, but the lower part has the limbs of an ass.[4] These animals are a type of foolish and double-tongued men, who in their morals are double also; as says the apostle: 'Having indeed a profession of goodness, but denying the power thereof' (2 Tim. iii, 5). Of whom also the prophet David says: 'Man when he was in honour did not understand; he is compared to the beasts that are foolish, and is made like unto them' (Ps. xlix, 20).

[1] Commentary on Isaiah, lib. v.

[2] Book of Job, ch. vi.

[3] Gregory further treats of the ass as a symbol of uncleanness in connexion with Job, xxxvii, 3, and xlii, 13–14.

[4] MS. 233 at Berne adds here: 'It is exceedingly brutish by nature' (Cahier).

[*G. C. D.*

NO. I. SIREN SUCKLING LION : NORWICH CATHEDRAL CHURCH.

[*G. C. D.*

NO. 2. MERMAN : ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, CHICHESTER.

[*G. C. D.*

NO. 3. CENTAUR : EXETER CATHEDRAL CHURCH.

The miniature shows the onocentaur as a compound of man and ass. He holds up a hare by the hind legs and pierces it with a spear, an exceptional feature. Allen[1] connects it with maps of the stars, but it may be noted that the hare was regarded as a symbol of uncleanness as it was thought to be double-sexed and capable of superfoetation.[2] The lesson itself is also illustrated in the form of two men having a lively discussion which involves much gesticulation. Above them is the legend: 'Ubi bilinguis diversis modis fallitur.' They are dressed in tunics, one having a mantle in addition fastened by a brooch on the right shoulder.

The miniature in MS. Sloane 278 (plate x, no. 2) embraces both the siren (who is pulling the sailor overboard by the hair) and the onocentaur. Their titles are written on the ground. The text is that of Hugo de Folieto, which, with another version, is given in the *de Bestiis et aliis rebus* in the appendix to the *Opera dogmatica* of Hugo de Sancto Victore. From one of them we learn that the onocentaur is partly compounded of onager, the wild ass. It says:

> The Natural Philosopher asserts that the onocentaur combines two natures in one; for the upper part is like the centaur, that is, the equine man, but the limbs of the lower part are those of the wild ass, 'onagri, id est, asini agrestis.'

This use of the wild ass as a symbol of evil passions is probably due to the descriptions in Pliny and Solinus, for they tell us that in the herds of wild asses in Africa each male rules jealously over a number of females, and that fearing the young males as their rivals they mutilate them with their teeth when born. The mothers therefore hide them. This is repeated by Isidore and Rabanus, the latter basing a learned disquisition upon it.[3]

[1] *Early Christian Symbolism*, p. 364.

[2] Pliny, bk. viii, 81 (55).

[3] The mutilation of the young males is illustrated in some of the bestiaries, notably in MSS. Bodl. 764, Douce 132, Harl. 4751, and 12 F. xiii; and there are pictures in others of the dam with the foal, and an adult male watching them. The symbolism in the bestiaries is founded on the passage in Job, vi, 5: 'Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass?' It is said to bray twelve times in the night of 25th March, and the same in the day, by which people know that it is the time of the equinox. The wild ass here symbolises the devil, who, when he sees the night and the day to be equal, that is, when he sees the people who were walking in darkness turned

The early French version of Philip de Thaun does not present any fresh feature regarding the onocentaur. It is derived from Isidore. The Arsenal bestiary gives but a short description with title 'Sagittarius,' and adds : 'Of these creatures Isaiah says : " Men bear a likeness to them, who have double hearts and speak double words " (Ps. xii, 2) ; it is when they speak well in front and ill behind.'

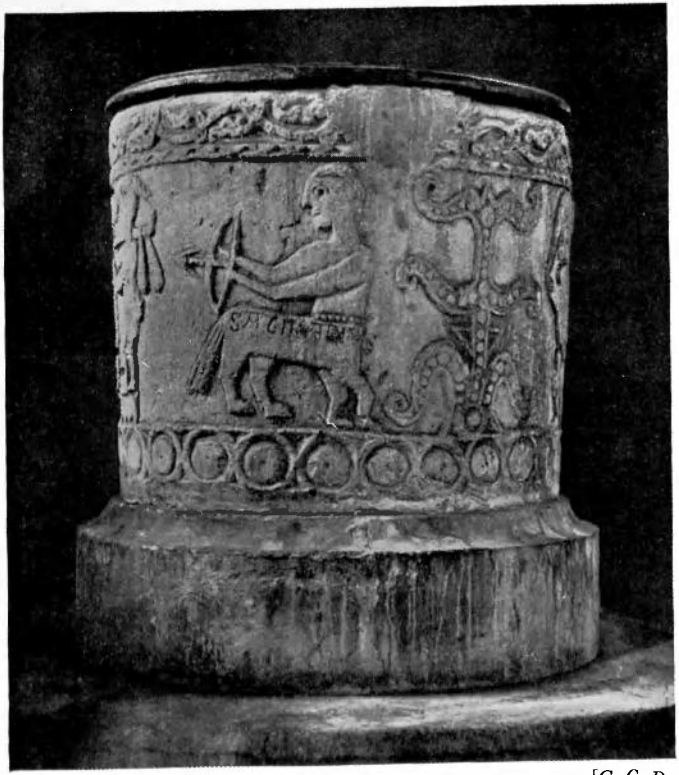
There is a very curious miniature in Bodl. 602, in which appear two onocentaurs, male and female. The male holds a sword and has the lower half of a man's body suspended by the legs from his ass-body. A man on the left is piercing him near the right shoulder with a spear. On the right is the female onocentaur, who has the upper half of a man suspended by the hands from her ass-body, and is being pierced in the breast with an arrow shot by a man perched in a tree. Both the men are clothed. The text throws no light on this scene, but it may well illustrate a fight between savage men and centaurs.[1] We may recall here the account in the Arsenal bestiary of the fight between Sagittarius and the savage man. There is no doubt that in view of its character, it is the onocentaur with which he is fighting, and the same applies to the carving on the font at West Rounton.

There are many carvings of centaurs in twelfth-century work, and a few in the thirteenth century. After that it seems to have gone out of favour, whereas its companion, the siren, remained in use until the sixteenth century.[2] When the centaur bears a bow and arrow, it is often inscribed with the name 'Sagittarius,' as upon the font at Hook Norton (plate XIII, no. 1) and the west doorway at Kencott, both in Oxfordshire, and at Stoke-

to the true light, Christ, and to be equal in faith with the just, then he roars day and night at every hour and goes about seeking food; and the passage in 1 Peter, v, is quoted in illustration. Gregory in his commentary on the passage in Job, says that the wild ass is a type of the Gentile people who, like the ass which has obtained grass, have been turned from their career of unrestrained pleasure by receiving the grace of the Divine Incarnation, with which both they (and the Jews) are together filled to the full. The passage in Isaiah, xl, 6, 'All flesh is grass,' is brought in in support of his argument.

[1] Male and female centaurs painted at Pompeii are illustrated in John Ashton's *Curious creatures in Zoology*, pp. 81, 82.

[2] A somewhat grotesque form of centaur appears upon a fourteenth-century misericord at St. Katherine's chapel, Regent's Park. It was formerly balanced by a siren, as shown in Ducarel's plate. This association and the details would indicate the onocentaur.



[*G. C. D.*

NO. I. SAGITTARIUS : HOOK NORTON CHURCH.

To face page 182.

[*Rev. A. H. Collins, phot.*

NO. 2. FEMALE CENTAUR : IFFLEY CHURCH.

sub-Hamdon, Somersetshire. As the name is applied equally to both onocentaur and hippocentaur, and where they occur singly or without definite association with other figures, there is no means of distinguishing them.

THE HIPPOCENTAUR.

The hippocentaur is described in a few of the bestiaries, notably in the group of which the Westminster manuscript is a member. The account came from Isidore, and no symbolism is given. He says:

> The hippocentaur is a kind of animal the name of which indicates that it is a mixture of man and horse. Some people say that the horsemen of the Thessalonians were such, because when they rushed into the battle they appeared to have a single body, partly horse and partly man. It is from this circumstance that they have asserted that hippocentaurs were imagined.[1]

The miniature in the Westminster bestiary probably represents the hippocentaur, but we cannot be quite sure. In Douce 88 the corresponding miniature shows a hippocentaur shooting an arrow at the chimaera, but in the Westminster manuscript they are on different pages. In the Cambridge manuscript both hippocentaur and onocentaur are illustrated; the former is vested in a shirt and is shooting with a bow; the latter is of a leaden grey colour, the human figure being of a boorish nature and bearing a (?) club and shield.

In architecture the hippocentaur is frequently associated with other animals, as upon the font at Luppitt, Devon,[2] and on a capital at Barfreston, Kent, where it holds a spear, and on the font at Bridekirk, Cumberland, where it strangles two dragons; or it shoots an arrow at another

[1] *Etym.* bk. xi, ch. 3. In his chapter *de Fabula* (*Etym.* i, xl), he adds: And so it was that the story of the hippocentaur was invented, that is, the man combined with the horse, for expressing the rapid passing of human life, because it is agreed that the horse is an exceedingly swift animal.

[2] Illustrated in *Archaeol. Journ.* lxvii, 289.

animal, such as a dragon on the chancel arch at Adel in Yorkshire, a griffin on the font at Darenth, Kent, or a monster on the doorway at Kencott, the arrow frequently going down the animal's throat.[1]

The hippocentaur as sagittarius in ecclesiastical art probably has its source in the sign of the zodiac, of which there are many illustrations in the calendars. The symbolism is given in the *Livres des Créatures* of Philip de Thaun.[2] He states on the authority of one Helpericus that the Egyptians gave the ninth sign (for November) the name of sagittarius, 'because it is an animal which knows how to shoot; and that it got this name on account of the hail that we have in that season, which causes us sores on the nose and chin. Our books of arms say that God made sagittarius, that it has a human figure down to the waist and is a horse behind; it holds a bow drawn behind it.' Then the symbolic interpretation is given. The human part of the centaur is a type of Christ when on earth, and the horse his vengeance on the Jews for having betrayed him and sinned against him. The bow signifies that when he was on the Cross and his body struck, his holy spirit departed to those whom he loved, and who were in hell awaiting his help; and the direction of the arrow signifies the way of the Cross.[3]

The details and symbolism here correspond with the scene usually termed the Harrowing of Hell, of which there are many miniatures in manuscripts, and carvings in churches. Christ appears thrusting a cross down the throat of a dragon or other monster, which typifies hell.

During the recent repairs to Winchester cathedral, a twelfth-century capital was unearthed, on which are two centaurs shooting arrows, one down the throat of a dragon-like monster holding a trident, and the other down the throat of a winged beast resembling a griffin.[4]

Centaurs are scarce in woodwork, but there are two

[1] Illustrated in *Archaeol. Journ.* vol. lxvi, 321. Sagittarius shooting an arrow down a dragon's throat may be seen on tiles in the museum at Mainz.

[2] Cotton MS. Nero A. v, twelfth century; and Sloane 1580, thirteenth century (B.M.).

[3] See translation in Wright's *Popular Treatises on Science*, 1841, pp. 38, 43.

[4] Communicated by Sir Thos. G. Jackson, R.A.

good examples on misericords of the thirteenth century at Exeter cathedral. In one instance a male centaur has shot an arrow into a dragon (plate XII, no. 3). The other is a female holding a bow. Female centaurs are rare. Perhaps the best recorded example is upon a twelfth-century capital at Iffley, where she is suckling her young one (plate XIII, no. 2). Abroad, in woodwork, a centaur is carved upon the thirteenth-century stalls in the cathedral church at Poitiers.

There is another variety occasionally met with, namely where the centaur holds a plant or branch, as upon the twelfth-century tympanum at Ault Hucknall, Derbyshire.[1] This seems to have been based on the figure of Chiron. In an eleventh-century herbal[2] at the British Museum there is a fine miniature, in which Chiron as a centaur holds up a plant. He has a human head and breast, forked beard, and horse's body and tail. Chiron is also illustrated on the Ebstorf map. In MS. Harl. 4986, a German herbal of the twelfth century, there is an illustration of the plant 'centaury major,' with the following legend: 'Chiron centaurus has herbas invenisse fertur, unde et tenent nomen centaurie.' In herbals the shapes of plants are frequently drawn to imitate animals with similar names.

It is not suggested that this varied treatment of the centaur is evidence of a correspondingly varied symbolism, but rather that the artists and carvers took advantage of the numerous models existing in classical art. This would be sufficient to account for the diversity found in ecclesiastical buildings.

The presence of these apparently anomalous forms in ecclesiastical carving may thus be held to be quite logical. The early theologians and commentators adopted them from classical writers, and used them for Christian teaching. Their views were repeated, accompanied by pictures, in the bestiaries and other manuscripts, which, if not always expressly of a religious nature, at least were produced in a religious atmosphere. That was sufficient

[1] Illustrated in Allen, *Christian Symbolism*, p. 366.

[2] MS. Vit. C. iii.

justification for the ecclesiastical carvers, who were in need of suitable models for decorative purposes.

As on previous occasions, I must gratefully acknowledge the valuable assistance rendered me by Mr. Chas. D. Olive in connexion with the texts. My thanks are also due to the Rev. H. F. Westlake for the facilities afforded me for studying the Westminster bestiaries, and to Mr. F. H. Crossley, Mr. Arthur Gardner, Mr. P. M. Johnston, the Rev. A. H. Collins, and Mr. S. Smith for kindly placing photographs at my disposal.