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the chapel in question. The dedication of a chapel at Yarmouth to St Henry is quite noteworthy. We can easily imagine how the story of the saint may have been brought to the seaport town by some merchant or ship-master whose business took him to the northern seas.

A LEGEND OF ST STEPHEN¹.

By Dr M. R. JAMES.

Among the oddest perversions of the canonical New Testament story that I know is one which has attached itself to the name of St Stephen. Our first literary record of it is in English; and the English form of the tale is, like most of the other literature I have to cite, a ballad or carol. It is found in a MS. (Sloane, 2593) of cent. XIV., XV. and was first printed by Ritson, *Ancient Songs* (Cl. II. No. 11). Since then it has appeared in several not uncommon collections of carols. I do not think I can avoid quoting it at length.

A Carol for St Stephen's day.

St Stephen was a clerk in King Herod's halle
and served him of bread and cloth as ever king befalle.
Stephen out of kitchen came with boares head on honde
he saw a star was fair and bright over Bethlem stonde.
He kyst adown the boares head and went into the halle:
I forsake thee king Herodes and thine werkes alle
I forsake thee king Herodes and thine werkes alle
There is a child in Bethlem borne is better than we alle.
What aileth thee Stephen? what is thee befalle
Lakketh thee either meat or drinke in king Herodes hall?
Lakketh me neither meat ne drinke in king Herodes' halle:
there is a child in Bethlem born is better than we alle.
What aileth thee Stephen? art thou wood or thou ginnest to brede
lakketh thee either gold or fee or any rich weede?
Lakketh me neither gold nor fee ne none rich weede:
there is a child in Bethlem born shall helpen us at our neede.
That is all so sooth, Stephen, all so sooth, I wiss
as this capon crowe shall that lyeth here in mine dish.

¹ For additional remarks, see *post*, p. 264.

That word was not so soon said, that word in that halle,
the capon crew *Christus natus est* among the lordes alle.

Riseth up my tormentors by two and all by one
and leadeth Stephen out of this town and stoneth him with stone.

Token they Stephen and stoned him in the way
and therefore is his even on Christes owen day.

There is another much longer English carol which seems to have been printed in broadside form as late as the eighteenth if not the nineteenth century. It is called *The Carnal and the Crane* (Carnal being I suppose a young crane) from the opening stanza :

As I passed by a river side
and there as I did reign
in argument I chanced to hear
a Carnal and a Crane.

The Carnal said unto the Crane:

“If all the world should turn
Before we had the Father;
but now we have the Son.”

In this later carol the episode of the cock is found, but in this case it is not connected with St Stephen but with the Wise Men. They announce the appearance of the star, and its meaning, to Herod. Whereupon:

If this be true, king Herod said
as thou tellest unto me,
this roasted cock that lies in this dish
shall crow full fences three.

The cock soon freshly feathered was
by the work of God's own hand
and then three fences crowed he
in the dish where he did stand.

“Rise up, rise up, you merry men all,
see that you ready be!
all children under two years old
now shall destroyed be.”

And so the ballad proceeds to the story of the flight into Egypt.

Now let us turn to another and more numerous series of documents in which either the story of the cock or St Stephen is connected with Christmastide. I mean the Scandinavian

ballads. A Danish carol has preserved the tale best. Its history is this: before 1736 it was sung by an old beggar woman before the door of Erik Pontoppidan's house. He noted it down and asked her if she believed it, to which she replied, "God forbid she should doubt it." Pontoppidan printed the song in 1736 in a small Latin tract entitled "Sweepings of the old leaven or the relics of heathendom and popery in the Danish world brought into the sunlight." But before this in 1695 Peter Syv quoted a couple of lines of this same ballad in a slightly varying form.

This is the Danish ballad as printed in Svend Grundtvig's *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser*, 1856, II. 525:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 En Jomfru ren oprunden er,
en Rose over alle Kvinder:
hun er den væneste, i Verden er
hun kaldes Himmelens Kejserinde.</p> | <p>1 A virgin pure upsprungen is
a Rose beyond all women
she is the fairest in the world
she is called the Queen of Heaven.</p> |
| <p>2 Hendes Hals saa hvid som Hermelin,
hendes kinder saa roselig røde:
for hun var saadan en Jomfru fin,
skulde hun vor Herre føde.</p> | <p>2 Her neck so white as Ermine
her cheeks so rosy red
for she was such a Virgin fair
as should our Lord bring forth.</p> |
| <p>3 Gabriel Engel blev til hende sendt,
til Jomfru Maria med Ære:
"Min Herre han haver mig til eder
sendt,
I skulle Christi Moder være."</p> | <p>3 Gabriel angel was to her sent
to maiden Mary with honour,
my Lord hath me unto you sent
you shall become Christ's mother.</p> |
| <p>4 Maria svarede saa dertil,
som Gud gav hende i Sinde:
"Mig ske alt efter Guds Villie!
jeg er vor Herre hans Tjenestekvinde."</p> | <p>4 Mary answered then thereto,
as God put her in mind:
Be it unto me after God's will
I am our Lord's handmaiden.</p> |
| <p>5 Udi to Snese Uger med Barnet hun
gik,
foruden al Sorrig og Møde:
men det var paa en Julenat,
den Herre han lod sig føde.</p> | <p>5 For two score weeks with child she
went
without any sorrow or trouble
but it was on a Christmas night
the Lord He would be born.</p> |
| <p>6 Sanct Stefan han leder de Foler i Vand
alt ved den ljuse Sjørne:
"For vist er nu Profeten fød,
som frelse skal al Verden!"</p> | <p>6 St Stephen he leads the foals to water,
all by the bright star light
For sooth now is the Prophet born
that shall save all the world.</p> |
| <p>7 Kong Herodes han svarede saa dertil:
"Jeg tror ikke denne Tale:
foruden den Hane, paa Bordet staaer
stegt,
slaar ud sine Vinger at gale."</p> | <p>7 King Herod he answered then thereto
I believe not this talk
except the cock that lies roasted on
the board
spread out his wings and crow.</p> |

- 8 Den Hane slog ud sine Vinger og gol,
vor Herre hans Fødsels Time:
Herodes faldt af sin kongelig' Stol,
af Sorrig begyndte at svime.
- 8 The cock spread out his wings and
crew
the hour our Lord was born
Herod fell off his kingly seat
with sorrow he 'gan to swoon.
- 9 Kong Herodes bad sadle Gangeren
graa,
til Bethlehem lyster ham at ride:
han vilde der dræbe det lille Barn,
som agted mod hannem at stride.
- 9 King Herod bade saddle his courser
gray
to Bethlehem list he to ride
he would there kill the little child
that thought with him to strive.
- 10 Maria tog Barnet udi hendes Arm,
og Josef tog Asnet tillige:
saa rejste de gennem det jødiske Land,
til Egypten, som Gud dennem viste.
- 10 Mary took the child in her arms
and Joseph he took the ass
so fared they through the Jewish land
to Egypt as God shewed them.
- 11 Vel fjortentusinde Børn saa smaa
deres Blod lod han udgyde:
men Jesus var tredive Mile derfra,
før Solen den gik til Hvile.
- 11 Full fourteen thousand children so
small
their blood did he pour out
but Jesus was thirty miles away
ere the sun went to his rest.

Next comes a ballad from the Faroë Islands: the text of this I have not seen, but depend on Svend Grundtvig's account of it in his introduction to the Danish ballad just quoted. The essential points as given by Grundtvig are these:

Stephen is Herod's servant. He goes out and sees the star in the East which shows him that the great king is born. When he proclaims this Herod bids them put out Stephen's eyes. We shall see, he says, whether your king will help you. Stephen's eyes are put out: but he now sees as well in the dark as he did before in the bright daylight. A roasted cock cut up into pieces is next brought in and set before Herod who says:

If the cock stood up and began to crow I would believe in Stephen's word.

Herod he stood and looked thereon: how the cock came together, that lay on the dish.

The cock flew up on the red gold stool: he clapped his wings and so fair he crew.

Thereupon Herod bade saddle his courser and ride to Bethlehem to find the newborn king. When he came riding into the court, Mary stood and greeted him.

Welcome Herod hither to arrive. We have here mingled both mead and wine.

Herod answers:

You should not so gladly welcome me: I will have your son to nail on the tree.

Mary answers that if Herod wishes to take her son he must go to Heaven after him. This Herod tries to do but is taken by twelve angels and dashed to the earth and there the devil lays hold on him.

Lastly there is a Swedish ballad from which the story has disappeared and only the chief actor is left:

Stephen was a stable boy. Hold thee well my foal

He watered all his five foals. Help, God and St Stephen.

Day comes not yet, but only the bright stars that come before day.

This is the introduction to a song of which there are several forms. It was sung by waits who ranged the countryside on St Stephen's Day; and the bulk of it resembles the ordinary wassail songs or Mayday songs, and is in fact an appeal for contributions. Corrupt as it is, it retains just enough of its original story to connect it with the other ballads.

When I was in Sweden this summer I saw three medieval representations of parts of this legend. They are all earlier in date than the English carol which is the first *literary* document in our series. So far as I can gather none of the three monuments has been interpreted by other antiquarians. All three are sculptures. The earliest is an exceedingly rough production which in England we should assign to the eleventh century, but which as it is in Sweden may date from the twelfth. It is one of three slabs discovered not long ago just outside the cathedral church of Skara. One of these represents the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden, the second as I think St Gregory with a book in his hand and a dove at his ear, and the last has the following scene. A man in a tall head-dress and shirt (of mail), evidently a chief, is seated facing *l.* His legs are crossed, a posture which is generally in medieval art a sign of bad temper or lively emotion. Before him is a large cup and over it a bird whose head is gone. It is unmistakably meant for a cock. Behind the chief on the *r.* is an attendant with drawn sword.

The second example is of late XIIIth century. In the National Museum at Stockholm is a fine altar-front in gilt metal divided into a number of panels with scenes from the life of Christ and figures of the Apostles. The scene following the adoration of the Magi shows us a king at a table on which are various dishes, and conspicuous among these a cock. On the right is a kneeling man, and behind him, a soldier killing a child. The next scene is the Flight into Egypt. One of the inscriptions surrounding the frontal serves, I think, to commend and confirm my interpretation. It runs thus

Virgineum regem mortis re(s)cindere legem
Pre(s)cit cor vatum divinitus irradiatum.

that is: the heart of seers, illuminated by God, foretells that the virgin-born king is annulling the law of death.

There are no prophets on the frontal, and there is no subject to which these lines apply so well as they will to the legend of Stephen's prophecy, "there is a child in Bethlehem born who shall save all the world." The words "divinitus irradiatum," moreover, fits in exactly with the vision of the star.

This altar-front came from the church of Broddetorp, near Skara: and Hr Hildebrand is inclined to suspect that it may have been originally made for Skara Cathedral.

The third representation dates from the XIVth century. It is on one of a remarkable series of sculptured brackets, intended to support statues, which are on the columns of the choir of Upsala Cathedral. On the two westernmost of these on the south side are the two following scenes:

1. A man on horseback: three or four other horses beside him. He raises his hands and stretches them out to the *r.* in the direction of a large star.

2. The Stoning of St Stephen.

I submit that these monuments can be best interpreted in connexion with the legend contained in the ballad.

The Skara relief shows us an angry king at table (indicated by the cup) and a cock on the table. The Broddetorp altar gives the king at table, the cock, and a kneeling man, in connexion with this. The Upsala sculpture shows a horse-tender powerfully affected by the appearance of a star, and im-

mediately furnishes us with a clue to the identity of the person (as I cannot but think) by showing us the martyrdom of St Stephen.

It is quite interesting to find that this picturesque legend is at least as old as the twelfth century, and, incidentally, to learn, though Sweden has not preserved any literary record of it, that it was well known in that country at an early date.

I must add to my interpretation a few words on the origin of the tale. There are two strange elements:

1. The story of the cock.
2. St Stephen as a stable-boy.

1. Grundtvig in his remarks on the Danish ballad has collected most of the parallels to the story of the cock. The leading story is that of two German pilgrims, a father and son, to Compostella, who were falsely accused of theft by an inn-keeper at Toulouse (or Tolosa). The son was hanged and remained alive on the gallows, supported by St James, for 36 days—in fact, until the father, who had continued his pilgrimage, returned to the spot. So far the common tale, which occurs in the *Legenda Aurea*, and other places. But later writers make the following addition, one placing the occurrence at S. Domingo, the other at Caussade, in the south of France. The father applied to the judge to have his son taken down. At the moment of his arrival, the judge was at table, with two chickens before him. He stoutly denied the possibility of what the old man reported, saying that he would believe it if the fowls before him would rise up and crow. This of course they did. They were kept in the parish church for some seven years afterwards and were much visited. Everyone who came to see them got a feather, and a new one immediately grew in the bird's body. Their progeny, a single pair, had the same peculiarity.

A second story says that two travellers were dining at Bologna: one cut up a roast chicken. His friend rashly said, "St Peter himself couldn't put that bird together again now." "St Peter?" retorted the other, "why, if our Lord Himself willed it, that cock could never get up again." The cock sprang up fully feathered, clapped his wings and crew: the sauce that

had been poured over him was sprinkled upon the two men, and they became leprous till their life's end.

To these I add what is probably an older form of the tale. It is found in Greek in some late copies of the so-called Gospel of Nicodemus; and in Latin also, but only so far as I know in a detached form. It tells how Judas after the betrayal came home and told his wife or his mother of what he had done. She reproached him bitterly, and said among other things that the prophet whom he had betrayed would rise again from the dead. I will believe that, said Judas, when the cock that you are boiling in that pot crows. In the Greek the parts are reversed: Judas is repentant, his wife is the mocker. "As the wretched man was yelping this out like a fox, the half-cooked cock was made alive again, came out of the boiling-pot forthwith and appeared with all his plumage restored, and so flew up upon the roof of the house, and there abode a long time exulting and rejoicing, as if he were proclaiming the time of the resurrection of Christ. Now the edition of the Greeks affirms that it was this same cock that in that very night convicted Peter by crowing when he denied." This story of Judas and the cock has a very obscure relative in the literature of Abyssinia. There is an Ethiopic document never yet printed, usually found in company with certain Passion-services, which is called the Book of the Cock. M. d'Abbadie has given a very brief account of the principal contents in the following terms. Immediately after the Last Supper (more probably the feast at Bethany) Akrosina (probably a corruption of Euphrosyne), wife of Simon the Pharisee, brought a roasted cock in a cooking-pot, put it into a handsome dish and presented it to our Lord. He touched it and restored it to life, and then sent it to watch the proceedings of Judas in Jerusalem, endowing it at the same time with a human voice. Rigrimt, the wife of Judas, sent it to the Jews. It was present at the interview of Judas with the priests, and returned and repeated the matter to our Lord, who thereupon dismissed it to fly about the sky for 10,000 years. Hereafter follows the history of the Passion with some legendary additions. Will not some one translate in full this curious writing?

In all these stories (and there are most likely others of the kind to be found) the function of the cock is the same. It converts the unbeliever. It is probable that the salient incident has been directly borrowed. I am inclined to think that the incident has been elaborated out of the story of Peter's denial, and that the first step taken was to connect the cock with Judas, and then possibly with Herod. As to the date of the various stories as we have them thus much may be said. We can trace the form in which St Stephen appears, to the eleventh or twelfth century. The Judas-legend (as I judge from the Latin form) is not later. The miracle of the pilgrims is traceable in art in the middle of the fifteenth century. Pietro di Foligno has painted it in the church of SS. Giacomo ed Antonio at Assisi. The story of the two travellers appears first in Helinandus, an author of the twelfth century.

2. St Stephen as a stable-boy. On this point the Scandinavian editors of the ballads have much to say which seems to me sound and interesting. I shall put their results quite shortly. They lay special stress on these points:

1. Dec. 26, St Stephen's Day, was universally celebrated in Scandinavian lands, and also to a large extent in North Germany, by horse-races, and all manner of rites connected with horses were performed on that day.

2. The season of Yule or Christmas was anciently the season of the great feast of the god Frey.

3. Frey was the special patron of horses.

To put the matter as shortly as possible, Stephen in his capacity as stable-boy is a reminiscence of the god Frey.

ST URITH OF CHITTLEHAMPTON.

By DR M. R. JAMES.

The church of Chittlehampton in Devonshire is dedicated to St Urith. No tradition about the patron is preserved there beyond this, that there is an empty niche at the east end of the church, with a late inscription, "To the memory of S. Hieritha, foundress of this church."

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