

ART. XXXVI. — *Notes taken at Naworth.* By R. S. FERGUSON, F.S.A.*

Read at that place, August 27th, 1879.

PART I.

IN the Oratory at Naworth, attached to the walls, are nine carvings in alabaster, which must have formed part of the decorations of a reredos or screen. They have been variously stated to have come from Kirkoswald, and from Lanercost: from the former in all likelihood, as the Household Books of Lord William Howard contain various entries referring to the transference of the chapel fittings from that place to Naworth.

They are all of the same height, 1 foot 5 inches. Three of them are 11 inches in breadth, while the other six are somewhat narrower. They are brilliantly coloured and profusely gilt, but the colouring and the gilding, in their present intensity, are recent and untrustworthy additions.

1. Represents the Ancient of Days, crowned and bearded Or, seated, hands upraised, and open: his feet rest on a green ground covered with flowers. In front is a *tau* cross, on which our Saviour: no wounds, head inclined to the dexter.

2. The Assumption, or exaltation and deification of the Virgin Mary in the body. The Apostle Thomas was absent at the Resurrection of the Virgin Mary, and doubted: he desired that the tomb should be opened before him; and when it was opened it was found to be full of lilies and roses. Then Thomas, looking up to heaven, beheld the Virgin bodily, in a glory of light, slowly mounting towards heaven, and she, for the assurance of his faith, flung to him her girdle, the same which is to this day preserved in the cathedral of Prato.*

* For very much of the information in this paper, I am indebted to the Rev. T. Lees, who is possessed of vast stores of knowledge on these and similar subjects.

* Extract from "The Passing of Mary," in the "Apocryphal Gospels, &c." (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh): —

"Then the Apostles, with great honour laid the body in the tomb, weeping and singing through exceeding love and sweetness. And suddenly there shone round them a light from heaven, and they fell to the ground, and the holy body was taken up by angels into heaven. Then the most blessed Thomas was suddenly

3. Bearded

The twelve Apostles surround a green mound, on which a red tomb. They all gaze upwards at the disappearing Virgin, and St. Thomas holds her girdle in his hand.

3. Bearded figure holding Lamb on his left arm, to which he points with index finger of right hand. St. John the Baptist.

4. St. Michael and the Dragon, not St. George, as is proved by the gilt wings. St. Michael wears armour of a highly ornate character, and over it a long red cloak. A gold circle, or coronet with cross on front, is on his head.

5. Is the same subject as No. 2, but differently treated. The Virgin Mary is seated in an almond-shaped aureole. She is, as yet, uncrowned; four angels, with golden wings, carry her heavenwards where is represented, between two more angels, God the Father. At her feet, to the dexter, is St. Thomas with the girdle.

The position of St. Thomas in groups numbers two and five gives a date for their execution, viz., later than the end of the fourteenth century. In both he is placed on the ground. Up to that date, his position is always in the clouds by the side of the Virgin Mary.*

6. A female, habited as a nun, in wimple and white tunic; over cloak of red with green sleeves, thrown open and fastened by a gilt morse. Her foot is on a crowned figure in red, lying on his stomach, but rising up on the elbows, and having a bloody dagger thrust through the breast. The female figure holds a sword, sheathed and point downwards, in her right hand, and a rod, now broken, in her left, whose end rests on the feet of the prone figure.

This is St. Catherine with the Emperor Maximin under her feet. By his orders she was scourged to death and beheaded; the rod and sword are in her hand. The tyrant afterwards died a violent death in battle. The legend of St. Catherine is well known.

7. A crowned figure holding a crowned head in his hands. This is not St. Cuthbert, who would wear a mitre, but King Oswy, bearing the head of St. Oswald. Mr. Lees supplies the story:—

“In A.D. 642, St. Oswald, the Christian King of Northumberland, was defeated and slain at the battle of Maserfield (Saxon chronicle). His conqueror, the ferocious Penda, king of Mercia, like an old pagan as he was, caused St. Oswald's head and hands to be cut off, and set up on stakes. A year after this, Oswy, Os-

brought to the Mount of Olivet, and saw the most blessed body going up to heaven, and began to cry out and say: ‘O holy mother, blessed mother, spotless mother, if I have now found grace because I see thee, make thy servant joyful through thy compassion, because thou art going to heaven.’ Then the girdle with which the Apostles had encircled the most holy body was thrown down from heaven to the blessed Thomas. And taking it, and kissing it, and giving thanks to God, he came again into the valley of Jehosaphat.”

* Jameson's Legends of the Madonna, p. 334.

wald's brother, and also King of Northumbria, defeated Penda, and rescued the relics.

"The head was taken to Lindisfarne and placed under the care of St. Aidan, in the monastery there; and the hands are deposited in the Chapel at Bamborough Castle.

"At page xciii., Lysons' Cumberland, you will find a picture of some glass at Edenhall,—a figure in mitra preciosa and chasuble, the dexter hand uplifted in benediction, the pastoral staff resting in the hollow of the left arm, and the left hand holding a crowned head. This, Lysons conjecture, represents St. Aidan with St. Oswald's head. It may be either Aidan or Cuthbert, both were bishops. St. Oswald's head was afterwards deposited in the arms of St. Cuthbert as a sacred relic, says Parker, ('Calendar of the Anglican Church,' p. 216). St. Cuthbert is generally represented in full episcopal costume, carrying St. Oswald's head; sometimes he has an otter near him . . . and occasionally a swan, the emblem of solitude."

8. A group representing the Betrayal of our Lord. In the centre is Judas embracing our Lord. Soldiers in armour with swords, axes, and halberts, and servants with huge staves, or rather clubs, press round. One of the latter lies on the ground with a bloody ear, and behind our Saviour is St. Peter returning his sword. In the background a figure holds up a lantern.

9. A naked figure with green breech cloth and long staff in his hand, but with a long white cloak, thrown open, over him.

Mr. Lees kindly supplies the following:—

"The naked figure with the long reed, or rod, is doubtless another representation of St. Thomas. From the 'Acts of the Apostle Thomas,' we learn that when the Apostles at Jerusalem portioned out by lot the regions for their future missionary labours, India fell to St. Thomas. This Saint objected, notwithstanding our Saviour's promise that His grace should accompany him. At that time Abbanes, an Indian merchant, was sent by King Gundaphoros to buy a carpenter and bring him to him. Our Saviour appeared to this merchant, and, by regular bill of sale, sold St. Thomas to him as a carpenter slave. The king, on Thomas's arrival in India, set him to build him a palace, and the Apostle '*having taken a reed measured the place* and marked it out; and he set the doors towards the rising of the sun, to look to the light, and the windows towards its setting, to the winds; and he made the bakehouse to be towards the south, and the water-tank, for abundance, towards the north.' In ecclesiastical art he is represented with a spear, or with an arrow, or with a long staff, as in 'Callot's Images.' With regard to the remarkable prominence given to St. Thomas among the images in Naworth Oratory, it is easily accounted for by the theory that the old families of Multon and Dacre regarded him as their patron Saint. This seems highly probable from the fact of Thomas being a prominent Christian name in both families. This may be regarded as an additional proof of the assertion that these images were brought from Kirkoswald."

PART II.

In the Oratory at Naworth is a painting on wooden boards, 3 feet $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches high, by 12 feet $0\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide. It is dated "Ano 1514."

It is divided into three compartments by two painted pillars, circular in section, standing on hexagonal bases, having Corinthian capitals, and painted to imitate marble. Each pillar bears a shield, quarterly. 1. Dacre. 2. Vaux. 3. Multon. 4. Grimthorpe or New Greystoke; thus proving that the picture was painted to order of Thomas Lord Dacre, K.G. It is not impossible that the figures represented, of which there are twenty-one, may be portraits of Thomas Lord Dacre, his family, and his retainers.

The dexter compartment represents the Flagellation. Our Saviour is bound to a pillar, and is being flagellated on breast and abdomen. He is covered with weals; has slight beard and moustache, and long hair; has the crown of thorns with nimbus outside thereof; slight transparent drapery is about his middle. The flagellants are four in number; all have mocking, distorted faces. Two are in the act of flagellation: of the other two, one is cleaving the tails of his cat, while the other is sucking his fingers. The cats have each three thrice-knotted tails. The flagellants wear tight parti-coloured and stripped jackets with full skirts, which lace across the chest, showing the shirt. One has a hood on his shoulders, and another wears a leather cap. Three wear light hose and have huge boots.

In the centre of the second compartment is Our Saviour on the Cross. The crown of thorns and glory surround his head; slight transparent drapery is about his middle; his feet overlap; only three nails hold him to the cross; the wound is on the right side. On a label over the cross is I.N.R.I.

On the dexter side of the cross, and close to it, is a soldier in plate armour, with bascinet and derisive face, from whose mouth issues a label, on which "Filius Dei es, descende de Cruce."

To the right of this figure are three figures, nimbed Or. The central one is a young man with long hair,—St. John—and is cloaked Gules, lined Argent, with underdress Sable. The other two figures are those of females in wimple; the dexter of whom is hooded Gules over her wimple, the sinister Sable. St. John holds the fainting Virgin

Virgin Mary, who is attired Or: the tight sleeves of her dress have trumpet-shaped cuffs which cover her hands. Her over-mantle of Vert, lined Gules, has fallen down. Next to the cross, in front of the mocking soldier, kneels the bearded, moustached figure of an old man, habited Gules, lined and turned up Ermine. Under the wide sleeves of his overdress appear tight cuffs Or. His cap is Or turned up Ermine. His dexter eye is quite closed, and sinister eye is open; on it rests the forefinger of his left hand. In his right hand is a long spear.

On the sinister side of the cross, and close to it, kneels, with clasped hands and long hair flowing down, Mary Magdalene. She is habited Vert with cuffs Or. Her sleeves are puffed. In front of her, with lid open, stands the box of precious ointment, like a small tankard.

Above this figure of Mary Magdalene is the figure of a Centurion, wearing plate-armour of German fashion, late fifteenth century, under a cloak Gules, lined and turned over Ermine. A scimitar is in sheath at his side, whose pommel is Or; one quillon is bent towards the point, and the other towards the pommel, so as to form a counter-guard. The Centurion has forked beard and wears a cap of maintenance, Gules turned up Argent. A gold badge or brooch, representing a man kneeling, is in the cap. The forefinger of his dexter hand points to our Saviour, while the sinister hand holds a label on which "Centurion. Vere filius dei erat iste."

To the left rear of the Centurion is a Jewish priest, bearded, in white cap like a bascinet—short red cape fastened with gold morse.—Under that a dark dress lined with fur, fringed at bottom, skirts slit at side, and fastened by ornamental morse, showing underdress of scarlet. Moderately wide sleeves showing gold cuffs. The priest's left hand rests on the Centurion's arm, and with his right he pats the Centurion.

Between the Centurion and the priest appears the head of a soldier in iron skull cap (Eisenkappe in German), with enormous ear-plates, He has a battle axe.

To the extreme sinister of central compartment is a youthful figure with long hair over shoulders; a red cap, jewelled in front, is at his head. Black dress heavily trimmed with fur, open at breast, shows the gold underdress; red hose, and broad-toed, slashed slipper shoes. A mocking face appears longside of the dividing pillar.

The third, or sinister compartment represents the Resurrection. Our Saviour sits on the side of the tomb. He is nimbed, clad in a long brown cloak, fastened by a morse. The wounds are very distinct. His right hand is raised in benediction, the two forefingers and thumb upright. In his left hand, is a cross-headed staff with cross banner,

Argent

Argent a cross cotised Sable. Three soldiers, in armour of German fashion, complete the group. Two behind the tomb are asleep; one in front is awakening and raising his vizor.

The first soldier to the dexter has on a helmet on which is a crest,—a man brandishing a sword. He holds a battle-axe in one hand, and the other supports his head. The second soldier has no crest on his helmet, but has large ear-pieces, or roundels. He has camail of mail; a spear in his left hand.

The third soldier is in front of the tomb, reclining on his left hand, while with his right he raises his vizor. He is a fine example of German armour of late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, but except genouillieres, he has no armour on his legs, which are in crimson hose, and round-toed, slashed slipper shoes. His hauberk of mail is cut into triangles at the bottom. The buckles of his brassarts and avant-bras are very distinctly shown. The coudieres and epaulieres and mentoniere are of exaggerated character.