

ART. XXVI.—*The Bound Man Devil at Kirkby Stephen—the Northern Loke.*

The following extract from *Professor S. Bugge's Studies on Northern Mythology, shortly examined*, by Professor Dr. GEORGE STEPHENS, F.S.A.,* was ordered to be printed in the Society's Transactions, at their meeting at Kirkby Lonsdale, June 27, 1883. The cross-fragment mentioned by the Professor as "a pre-antique Church-cross or Grave-pillar," was found imbedded as building material in the north wall of Kirkby Stephen Church, and was probably placed there about 1220. The fragment is now to be seen in the Church.—J.S.†

IN the year 1870, in repairing the old Church at Kirkby Stephen, in the county of Westmorland, only four English miles from Brough, was dug out one of the blocks of a pre-antique Church-cross or Grave-pillar, which is engraved as a frontispiece to this volume. A cable-pattern ornaments the sides, nothing is on the back. It therefore probably stood near a wall. It is of carboniferous sandstone, 26 inches high by 14 broad. The whole front is taken up with one figure cut in relief, a man with two Rams-Horns lying on his back, but curiously BOUND HAND AND FOOT on the point of a rock.‡ Its date must be about the year 700. Even if it were 100 years later, it would make no difference to my argument.

Now all our English old-lorists are agreed that this bild represents *the Devil*; and of this there can be no doubt; but how? No such figure has been found before in all Europe.

* Williams and Norgate, London, 1883.

† The very learned notes of the distinguished Professor are not here reproduced in full, and the paper has been a little abbreviated.

‡ Rev. J. F. Hodgson gave a very small photograph of this stone opposite p. 186 of the Transactions of this Cumb. and Westm. Soc., vol. iv., and at p. 188 rightly says that it represents "Satan bound." But at p. 309 of my article on the Brough stone, vol. v., I showed that this figure *could* not be the *Christian* Devil, but was undoubtedly a survival from heathendom, and really represented the only fiend the Angels could understand, their own LOKE, the slayer of the good God BALDOR.

In

In its *oldest* symbolization, of which we have so many remains, written and painted and sculptured, the Christian Church had *no* token for the Evil-one in a *human* shape. AS THE VICTORIOUS RULER, we see Our Lord in ancient Christian art (often bearing his Cross or the Holy Book) trampling on a Lion or Adder or Serpent. This is in reference to the Psalm in the Vulgate Latin (Ps. xc., v. 13) : "Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis ; et conculcabis leonem et draconem ;" in the English version (Ps. xci., v. 13) : "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder : the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." AS THE VICTORIOUS REDEEMER, Christ (or some symbol of Christ) was represented standing on the Arch-fiend figured under the type of a Serpent or Dragon. From the temptation in Eden downwards, the Devil is a Snake. From the earliest Catacombs downwards, the Serpent is the Tempter. Now and then, a little later, very seldom, to symbolize his talking with Eve, the artist gives to the Worm who is curled round the Tree a human Head.* But the Evil One may also be represented typically by an echo or image, something directly in contact with him. Thus, in connection with the miracle of our Blessed Lord when he let the Devils go into Swine, we see Fiends as Swine. The oldest grave-crosses frequently show Christ trampling on a Worm or Dragon ; while on the Bewcastle Cross anno 670, and on the Ruthwell Cross anno 680, he treads down Swine.

In the usual way, therefore, the block *above* this Kirkby Stephen Devil-stone was sculptured with the figure of

* At No. vii., p. 361, of J. Y. Akerman's Roman Coins (vol. ii., London 1834), in his description of the usual Gold and Silver money struck by Valentinianus III. (424-455), he says: "Same legend. A figure standing, holding a cross, and a globe surmounted by a Victory; his right foot on a serpent." This piece is a Solidus. But his No. viii. describes another such golden coin as follows: "Same legend. A figure standing, holding a cross, and a globe surmounted by Victory; his right foot on a SERPENT WITH A HUMAN HEAD." This is the earliest Coin-instance I know of the man-headed Snake-fiend, as a distinctly Christian emblem of the Fall in Paradise. By a curious inadvertence, this last Solidus of Valentinian III., copies of which are so common in all Classical Cabinets, is *entirely omitted* by H. Cohen in his *Medailles Imperiales*, T. 6, Paris 1862, p. 502 foll.

Christ

Christ (or some symbol of Christ) trampling on the foul imp below him, as he does on the Bewcastle and Ruthwell Crosses. If not, it must have borne the figure of St. MICHAEL, the Fiend's triumphant foe, of which we have so many ancient examples. But in Christian art in the barbarian west St. MICHAEL frequently took the place of THUNOR, the great enemy of LOKE and parallel of SATAN in the heathen myths.

I will mention some proofs of this. In an English MS. in Oxford, from the 10th century, we have St. Michael warring against Satan, who has a human form and a Serpent's tail. Elsewhere in England St. Michael is armed with the Thunder-bolt, the attribute of THUNOR. And as THUNOR was the great Protector against Evil, even after death, and as we have several Scandinavian runestones on which THOR is invokt to *bless* and *keep* the tomb or the runes, and thus the hero who lay in the Barrow, living there a spiritual life, so we have still left in Scandinavia six runestones on which St. MICHAEL is invokt to *bless* and *keep* the Christian dead.*

As I have said, the early Church knew nothing of a Man-Satan in its primitive typology; the Kirkby Stephen stone is thus evidently Scandinavian-heathen overgang.

As to the next step, the introduction of even *half* human Devil-figures into Christian art—Classical Centaurs, Sirens, Fauns, &c., with other local pagan half-gods, this, as far as I know, dates no earlier than about the 10th century.

* As late as in the 13th century Michael of Kildare thus addresses his patron saint (E, Guest, English Rhythms, vol. ii., London 1838, p. 336):

Hail seint michel: with the lange sper

Fair beth thi winges: up (= upon) thi sholder

Thou hast a rede kirtil: a non (= down) to thi fote.

Thou ert best angle (= of angels): that ever god makid (= made).

And no wonder. MICHAEL drove the Devil and his Angels from Heaven to Hell, fights daily against all demons and tyrants, and at the world's end shall slay the Dragon and Antichrist. He took MERCURY'S office as Lord of the dread Hades-Balance, with which he weighs the souls, giving to each bliss or woe. And he was the guide and guardian of St. Paul in his journey to Hell, showing him all its horrors, till that apostle by his ceaseless prayers gained from God every blessed SUNDAY'S REST to the spirits in torment till the Day of Doom.

In

In the middle age, fiends become merely monstrous;* while the Renaissance gives us Acheron, Charon, Hecate, Pluto, Cerberus, and the rest. So often overcame and outwitted or mockt, the Devil at last became also a kind of Vice or Clown.

But the idea of man-shaped Fiends in general was so natural and common a conception, that it was sure eventually to make its way into Christian art. And doubtless it crept in early. In fact, some things could hardly be treated without it. For instance, later on, when people begun to represent to the eye the casting out of a Devil by Christ or a Saint, how was this to be done? In the simplest way, they showed a little being in human shape rushing out of the Demoniac's mouth. Even such a small thing as this would familiarize folk with a man's form for a Fiend, with or without wings or tail.†

St. Augustine in the 4th century (*De Civit. Dei*, L. 11, Cap. 33) says that the prison into which the Devils were cast was *this our earth*, where they live especially in the air. Many of the Fathers teach the same doctrine, pointing out that our earth was a poor and dark and miserable abode, compared with the lustre of the bright and holy heaven which the fallen ones had lost.‡

But if the *oldest* Christian Church had no HUMAN Satan in its bild-craft, still less had it a HUMAN BOUND Satan. This would seem to have been an essentially Northern idea, and to have spread over Europe wherever the Northern

* A good and not exaggerated specimen of this class is an Italian group, about a couple of feet high, alabaster, partly gilt and painted, now in Christiania. Date about 16th century. The subject is S. Michael thrusting the Devil down into the flaming Hell. The fiend is FREE, as usual, but has horns, wings and tail.

† In later Christian art the temptation of Christ was also introduced, which could scarcely be done without clothing the Evil One with a human figure.

‡ It continues in England down to the middle of the 15th century. See the Master of Oxford's Catechism: "C. where be the anjelles that God put out of heven and bycam devilles? M. Som into hell, and som reyned in the skye, and som in the erth, and som in waters and wodys." (Wright and Halliwell, *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, vol. i., London 1845, p. 231; J. M. Kemble, *Salomon and Saturn*, p. 218.)

Goths wandered or settled.* It is wonderful how long it held on in Scandinavia. Saxo Grammaticus tells us (Hist. Dan. Bk. 8), that OUTYARD-LOKE (Ugarthilocus) was BOUND hand and foot with immense chains. And in Sweden, in the horrible witch-burnings of the 17th century, the mad sufferers affirmed that their Master the Devil was BOUND with great fetters. These they year after year tried to saw away; but the moment a link was nearly sawn thro, an Angel came and soldered it fast again.† How different is all this to the oldest Jewish as to the oldest Christian Satan! These malignant beings are always with them essentially FREE. They wander and tempt at will. The earliest Christian announcement about the Devil is, that he is NOT YET fettered in Hell, but SHALL BE.‡ In the 2nd Epistle of Peter, ch. 5, v. 8, the holy Apostle admonishes us openly and with authority: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." This is the tradition of the Church, not the centuries later fantasies of half-heathen obscure Heretics.

But in Scandinavia when BALDOR's slayer, LOKE, is doomed, one of his sons is changed into a Wolf and bites his brother to death. With his bowels the Anses fetter

* The oldest orthodox Christian Father known to me, who distinctly speaks of the Devil as *Bound*, is St. Isidore of Seville (Hispalensis), who died in 636.

† In chapter xiii. of his immortal "Ivanhoe," Walter Scott lets Prince John receive a letter containing *only* the laconic notice: "*Take heed to yourself, for THE DEVIL IS UNCHAINED!*" I have often heard it in England as THE DEVIL IS LOOSE, or HELL AND THE DEVIL IS BROKEN LOOSE. As far as I know, its origin has been feebly explained. It is used in a sharply defined meaning, to express a moment when some great convulsion or revolution is at hand, some reaction or surprise or dangerous extremity has taken place, something altogether unusual and unexpected and full of peril. I have no doubt that this phrase is simply an old Christian translation of a similar heathen cry of alarm: "LOKE IS UNCHAINED (LOOSE)!"

‡ In book 4, sec. 7, of his "Recognitiones," the writer, who goes under the name of St. Clemens as a Greek Father, and whose date is about the 1st half of the 3rd century, sharply proves that *sinners shall not* be cast into Hell *before the end of the world*, because *not till then shall the Devil himself* be cast into its flames. The above work is a curious and interesting religious romance, and contains the oldest Western version known to me of the famous Folk-tale—found in endless shapes and tungs all over Europe—The Chaste Wife, and her happy re-union with her husband and children.

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the murderer to a pointed rock, and there he shall abide till Ragnarauk. The bowels become Iron, the hardest adamant, and a poisonous snake spits its venom over him.

Can any contrast, both in form and spirit, be greater?

The moment we touch English ground, we find the Devil BOUND. We need only refer to Cædmon's Songs, originally written in North-English in the 7th century, but now only extant (excepting the fragment on the Ruthwell Cross) in S. English of the 10th. And then we have the charming legend of St. Andrew, probably of the 8th century, but now only known in S. E. of the 10th. So again the curious "Salomon and Saturn fliting," about 10th century in S. E. Here and elsewhere, the Fiend is always BOUND.

Yet, strange enough, in his character as a Tempter, the Devil is FREE all the same. Here we have the continual collision between the Northern heathen Fiend (Loké) who was BOUND, and the Eastern Christian Satan (Lucifer) who was FREE.* It gave rise to endless contradictions and absurdities in the same land, the same author, the same page all Europe over. In England so strong was the native tradition, that writers even introduced the BOUND Demon instead of the FREE, when translating or paraphrasing from a foreign tung. We have curious instances of this in the charming O. E. Lay of St. Andrew, a loose version of the Greek prose story written in the 6th age by Lucius Charinus, a Manichæan heretic, to strengthen the sect of his Gnostic friends; but in its present shape the romance is much later. The Wikings must have been very sharp fellows to have been acquainted with it, for it was little known in the oldest Church, MS. copies of it are excessively scarce, no Latin version has ever been heard of, and it is quite different from the usual Legend of St. Andrew which was early done into

* As to the same difficulty with regard to the Classical *Bound* Prometheus who yet was *free*, and the Northern *free* Loke who yet was *Bound*, see N. F. S. Grundtvig, *Nordens Mythologi*, 2nd ed., p. 525 foll.

Icelandic.

Icelandic. This Manichæan Andrew-fable was first discovered by Thilo in 1845, and was not printed till 1851 by Tischendorf. The late—10th—century English poetical copy the Wikings scarcely studied; if they did, they must *at once* have used it for their Loke myth, and it must have taken only *a few hours* to grow *up* and root itself *down* in Scandinavia, *instantly* becoming there a mighty Tree covered with the moss of ages.

In the above-mentioned older English version, the stave-rime paraphrase of this Greek holy-tale, the Devil is spoken of as BOUND in two places. The first is at line 2385 of Kemble's edition. Here, in a speech of 20 lines, amplified from only one line in the Greek prose (p. 157 in Tischendorf), St. Andrew rebukes the Devil, in this poem as elsewhere called Devil, Belial, Satan, &c. *ad libitum*. In his long answer he also says to the fiend, in Kemble's English version :

*where the King of kings
with chains did load thee.*

The Greek text has only : *But the Lord Jesus Christ SHALL cast thee down into the abyss*. This violent change of the Greek future SHALL into the English past, DID, together with the *addition* of the CHAINS, is most instructive. In the largely abridged O. E. later prose version (Goodwin's edition, p. 16) the Saint exclaims merely : "*My Lord Jesus Christ hath trodden thee down under foot*," that is, *hath overcome thee*.

The second instance is lines 2754—9 of Kemble, p. 160 in Tischendorf. Here three Greek lines of prose are expanded into 20 of English verse. In this reply of the Hallow to the fiend one passage is, as translated by Kemble :

*who thee in wretchedness of yore
fastened
with fiery fetters,
where thou ever since
bound down in torment,
hast dwelt in misery.*

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In the few words of the Greek text, and of the O. E. later prose version (Goodwin p. 18), there is no mention at all either of Hell or of Binding.

As we have said, this curious blending of the *free* and the *unfree* fiend could not be got rid of. Sometimes the writers tried to escape the difficulty by giving the Evil-one another name, for he had many synonyms. Or they let him find some substitute, a son, or kinsman. Cædmon gives the BOUND Satan a FREE minister and messenger in the person of a mighty Chief, whom he had favored and enriched when in Heaven, and who now out of gratitude does his bidding. But of course all this only masks and disguises the evident fact, the *survival* from an older myth of a being who came in contact with a parallel in another creed.

Even down to the illustrious and learned Milton, we find the same thing. In his *Paradise Lost*, Book I., l. 44—48, he says of Satan :

“Him the Almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from the ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition ; there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire.”

Yet, having no choice, the same noble poet, only a few lines further on (l. 209—213), thus describes the same Satan :

“So stretch'd out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay,
Chain'd on the burning lake : nor ever thence
Had risen, or heav'd his head ; but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs.”

And so he *freely* flies to Paradise accordingly, to tempt Adam and Eve !

I have spoken of the first heathen LOKE figure, BOUND to a rock, as lately found in the North of England. Let us now go in its illustration from stone to parchment.

Drawings in the olden MSS. are so precious, because they give the draughtsman's pictures of things as he saw
and

and thought them in his own time, tho the subject he paints may be centuries older.

In the 10th century S. E. Cædmon codex, there are 50 large drawings illustrating the text. In five of these the artist introduces the being called by the poet SATAN and LUCIFER. He lies BOUND in Hell; his deputy, an apostate prince, being his errander to Paradise on his fatal mission. Let us go thro these five plates.*

A (No. 4), Satan, *on his back*, BOUND, his hands to each other, his neck and feet to the 2 largest teeth of Hell-mouth, the Hell-goddess or Leviathan, in whose jaws (Helle-ceafl) he is firmly fixt. (Above; Christ, wielding 3 Javelins in his right hand, is driving all the Devils into Hell.—Still higher up, apostate spirits offer Crowns and Palms to the Pride-drunk Archangel.)

B (No. 11), Satan is seen *on the side* of Hell-mouth, within the ramparts of Hell's mouth. He lies *on his belly*, and has a TAIL.† His hands and feet are BOUND. (Above; the Lord Christ with faithful Angels.)

C (No. 12). Satan, half-sitting, half-lying is BOUND, neck, hand and foot, to 2 stakes in Hell-house. Flames below him. (Above, is the Deity supported by Seraphims.)

D (No. 13), Satan, suspended *on his belly*, is BOUND to a stake in Hell-town. He has 2 WINGS. His winged messenger receives his instructions, and is also seen flying thro Hell-door to Paradise. (Above, the Serpent talks with Eve, &c.)

E (No. 18), Satan *on his back*, BOUND hand and foot in Hell-house. His bode is seen on his return, first flying down thro Hell-door, then speeding thro Hell-town, and then standing by his Lord the Bound

* These plates are in the Archæologia, Vol. 24. "Account of Cædmon's Metrical Paraphrase of Scripture History, by Sir Henry Ellis, with 52 facsimile plates of the Illuminations." It is not thought necessary to reproduce them here.

† Intercourse between England and Ireland, from the earliest times, was very great. As a proof how things *grow*, we may remember that, in the *late* (about A.D. 1149) and exceedingly popular "Vision of Tundale" the Irishman, LUCIFER in the abyss is an enormous black giant with more than 1000 hands, claws of iron and a horrid beak and TAIL. He lies BOUND over a gridiron, and fiends blow the fires under him.—When Hermod went to the underworld to fetch back to Walhall his dead brother Baldor, he of course had to pass GIALLAR-BRO, the bridge over the Hell-river Giall, which leads to the house of Queen Hell. This Bridge is a feature of immense antiquity in many lands, especially in primitive Oriental traditions. It lived on long in England and Scotland as "the Brig o' Dread," and often plays a part in the Christian Hell and Purgatory tales so common in the middle ages. But these Purgatory tales themselves are as old as the hills, and are often referred to in Classical writers.

Devil,

Devil, recounting his triumph over our First Parents. (Above; Adam and Eve after the Fall.)

Now all these five paintings, which are so surprisingly different in detail, are by one and the same limner, who in the 10th year-hundred illustrates a Song of the 7th. In only one thing does he hold fast the exact words of Cædmon. Satan is every where painted BOUND.

We remark in passing that *the fortified Hell-house* as well as *the Death-goddess Hell* herself, in these pictures, were confessedly *unknown in any Christian period*, and *must* have come in bodily *from Scandinavia*.

The oldest mention of the Bound Devil goes back to an apocryphal book in the 6th century, written in Greek, then in Latin, long obscure, circulating first among heretics and condemned by the Church. Yet, far off from Greece and Italy, amid a barbarian population as yet largely heathen and come in from heathen Scandinavia—wild clans knowing little Latin less Greek and no Hebrew—we have in the 7th century, firmly fixt and interwoven in the orthodox doctrine in England, a BOUND fiend. In the same land is a BOUND Satan of stone, part of a Christian Cross. That this figure has Horns need not surprise us. Manifold is popular fancy; this variation may not have been unknown here and there in Scandinavia itself, at least in Denmark.

But a BOUND Devil in Song, and a BOUND Devil in Stone, both earlier than the year 700, must inevitably—like the Baldor-myth on the Ruthwell Cross—have sprung from times and beliefs some centuries still older in the Scando-Anglic folklands, and therefore could not possibly have been first invited by Wikings in the 9th or 10th year-hundred after Christ.

NOTE by the Editor.—The Society is indebted to Professor Stephens for permission to reprint the above, and to reproduce the engraving.