

ART. XXXI.—*A relic of Pennington Old Church.* By  
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*Read at Langholm, July 12th, 1898.*

EVERYBODY who has visited Cartmel, must have noticed the rich but beautiful screen work of 17th century date which stands above the ancient stalls. This screen was but a part of numerous alterations and additions carried out by George Preston of Holker, between 1617 and 1620.\* George Preston died in 1640, and his inscription, still to be seen in the priory church, expressly states that he “adorned the chancel with curiously carved wood work.”

The most noticable feature in Preston’s screen are the carved oaken pillars and pilasters which support the cornice. The chief design on the pillars are winding spiral vines and clusters of fruit : but there is more than this ; for every pillar and pilaster bears on the front facing into the chancel, two or three of the emblems of the passion filling open spaces among the foliage ; and the same emblems are repeated on the cornice and pilasters.

The emblems which are found are :—the cross, the ladder, a cross with a banner attached, a scourge, the three nails, a torch, a gauntlet, a spear, a mallet ; lantern, the reed and sponge of vinegar, the sword with the ear on the blade, a column and two scourges, Christ’s vesture, the cup, crown of thorns, a cross crosslet, the pincers, the cock, a St. Andrew’s cross, and a battle axe over the two clubs crossed.

Pennington Church lies across the Leven Sands due west about three and a half miles. The parish is an

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\* Stockdale’s Annals of Cartmel, pp. 26, 49, 76, and 414.



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CARVED PILLAR FROM PENNINGTON CHURCH.

ancient one, and contained an ancient church: but the entire fabric was, it is believed, swept away in 1826 when a new church was built.

This year however, the vicar, the Rev. T. Edge Wright sent the writer a relic of the old church, which he had found laid aside with lumber, and which proves that the improvements in 1826, destroyed some very interesting work. The relic is a part of a pillar of the same pattern as those at Cartmel, and probably in the same way it formed part of a screen. As would be expected the pillar preserved is of smaller size than those at a great priory church.

The Pennington post, or rather part of one, measures 3 feet in length, and its greatest diameter is over 4 inches. Like the Cartmel pillars, its top is a sort of a Corinthian capital, while the vine foliage is evidently a copy, although the detail and finish is less refined. There is however one noticeable difference. The emblems upon it are not confined to one face, but are dispersed at intervals all round, so that to see them all, it would be necessary to pass round the pillar when it stood in position. Another feature of interest is that in more than one place where a hard knot occurs it has been cut out, and a piece inserted and carved over. Some of these pieces are gone, and others remain. The emblems on the post, enumerating from the top, are the cock, basin and ewer, Christ's vesture, and three dice, a pillar crossed by a spear and reed with sponge, the sword (like an eastern scimitar), mallet and axe crossed, a battle axe crossed with a mace.

It seems probable that the screen being quite small and having only a few pillars, the carver put more emblems on each, in order to include the whole series as seen at Cartmel.

Stockdale alludes to old furniture remaining in his time about Cartmel, and believed to be the work of the carvers brought

brought into the district by George Preston, or that of workmen who had learned carving and design from them. The finding of the present pillar seems to bear this out. The Cartmel carving is far too good for local craftsmen, but there is a certain rudeness about the Pennington example which probably indicates the work of a local carver who had studied under a master, or who was working at a rather later date from the original. It forms at any rate an interesting memento of a vanished church.