

ART. XXV.—*On some ancient Sculptures of the Devil Bound.* By W. G. COLLINGWOOD.

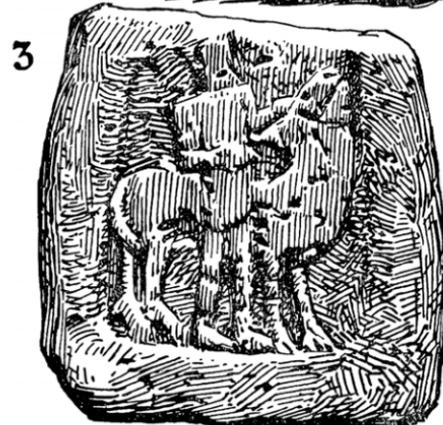
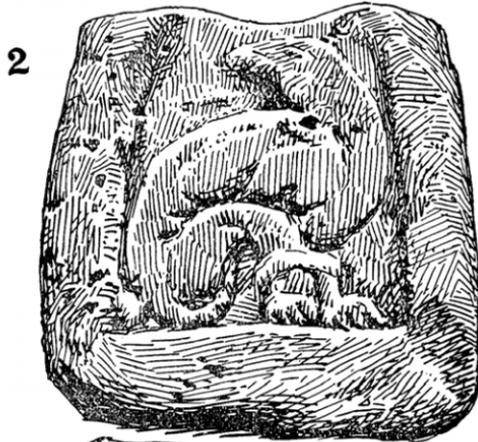
Communicated at Seascale, June 11th, 1902.

IN the garden of Tullie House, Carlisle, an old carved stone has been lying for some years. It is of red sandstone, measuring 21 inches in height, 27 by 20 near the base, and 20 by 16 on the top surface, which contains a square hole, measuring 12 by 10 inches, possibly for use as the socket-hole of a cross-shaft.

There are many such socket stones from which the shafts have been lost; two well-known examples with elaborate carving on them exist at Beckermeth (St. John's) and Brigham (in the church tower). These, however, are pre-Norman, while the Tullie House stone is carved in the style of the twelfth century, with four reliefs on the four sides.

Mr. L. E. Hope, the curator, kindly had photographs taken by Mr. Tassell; but as the relief is low and the stone weather-worn, it is not an easy subject for the photographer. I have made my sketches (Figs. 1 to 4) partly from original drawings and partly from these photographs, trying to interpret the forms as far as I can in plain black and white.

One side (Fig. 1.) represents a dragon with four large feet, each of them three-toed and spurred, and a very long serpent-like neck—as it seems, but so involved that I literally can't make head or tail of it. Another side (Fig. 2) has a great griffin or bird, with a head like an eagle's, looking over its back, closed wing, two legs with powerful talons, and a long tail which shows that the creature is not just a common eagle, but a symbolic monster. On the third side (Fig. 3) is a rude human figure standing by





5 Laocoon!

cloister of St. J. Lateran



4 Loki!

Garden of Tullie House

a quadruped which has more resemblance to an ox or bullock than anything else; the man is "holding the bull by the horns," and the creature is throwing its head back and thrusting forward a fine dewlap. The fourth side (Fig. 4) exhibits a rude, semi-human figure, whose arms, turning into serpents, are locked under his knees, and his ankles are shackled into a rigid bar, as of iron.

These four creatures cannot be meant for Evangelists. If—as I think is probable—they were at the foot of a cross, they must have been meant as the dragon was meant when it is found on the cross-bases at Brigham and Beckermet. We find parallel ideas in the serpent beneath the Lamb on the Gosforth "Fishing Stone," and beneath the little human figure on the Penrith hogback, and beneath the Christ in resurrection on the Burton shaft; and, again, the swine-heads under the feet of Christ in blessing on the Bewcastle cross. The cross implies the presence of Christ; the dragon, serpent, or swine mean the powers of evil nature, sin and death. These four monsters are probably meant to represent four aspects of evil overcome, and in subjection to the cross.

But why do we find these four creatures, only one of which is a dragon, to symbolise evil powers in subjection? Perhaps we may get some light on their meaning from the saga-story of the four Land-wights of Iceland, as told in the *Heimskringla*. In the old heathen days, it was said, the King of Denmark sent a wizard to Iceland to get revenge on the people there for ridiculing him in their songs. The wizard turned himself into a whale, and swam to the eastern shore of the island. There he saw a great dragon which scared him away with its venom. Then he tried the north coast, but he was met by a gigantic bird which drove him off. On the west coast he was opposed by a monstrous bull; and he had no better luck in the south, where a man-giant kept guard with an iron staff. These were the four Land-wights or guardian spirits of heathen Iceland.

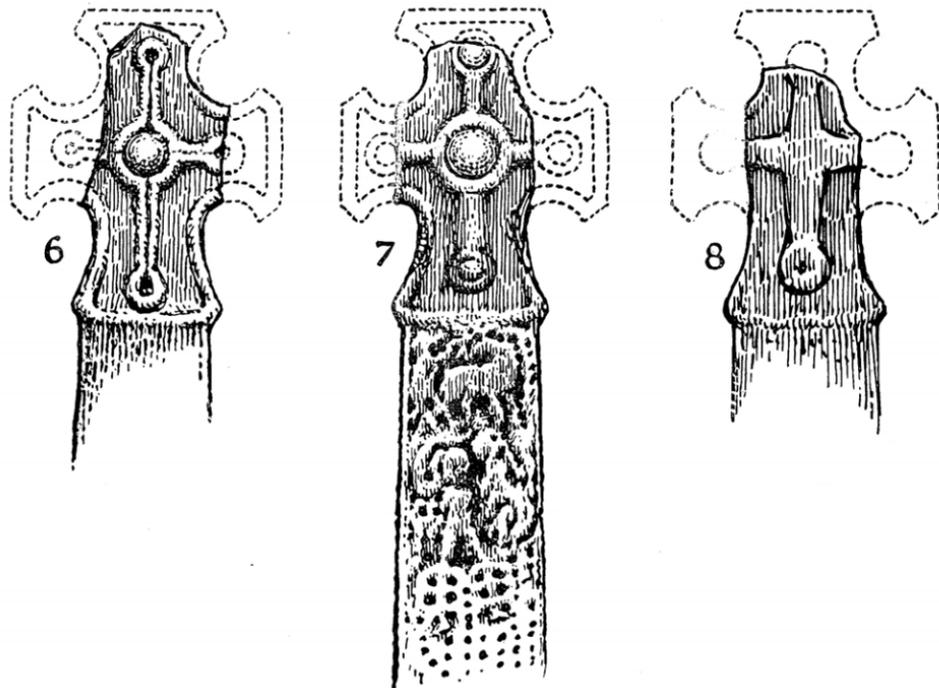
This story, however, as Mr. Eiríkr Magnússon points out to me, is a purely Icelandic legend, and of a very late date (c. 985.) He suggests that the first figure may represent the Midgarth-worm or the Fenrir's Wolf (both of which we know on the Gosforth Cross, etc.)—the second, the wind-giant Hræsvelgr (corpse-swallower) “who sits at the end of the world in the likeness of an eagle, from under the wings of whom, when he taketh to flight, winds proceed,” Edda (younger) I. 80. In the third he sees Thor, in the guise of a young man, tearing off the head of Ymir's finest ox, Himinbrjótr (Heaven-breaker) to bait his hook for the Midgarth-worm:—we are familiar with the subject in the Gosforth “Fishing Stone.” “Hræsvelgr sitting at the end of the world, *i.e.*, on the sea-shore, would not inaptly lend himself to a symbolic indication of a fishing excursion further out at sea than any that the fisher-giant Ymir had ever known:” so that these three might illustrate Thor's fishing.

“The fourth figure,” he continues, “seems unmistakably to represent one going through the peculiar form of torture of having the knee-houghs drawn so high up that the elbow-joints could be pressed through them; the hands being presumably tied to the neck, or behind it. Perhaps this is but a variation of the punishment inflicted on Loki, following some unknown recension of the myth.”

The crouching attitude is very nearly that shown in Fig. 5, copied from an unpublished sketch by the late Prof. Ruskin, a spandril in St. John Lateran at Rome. Mr. Ruskin noted the resemblance of his subject to Laocoon; and the Tullie House figure, with limbs ending in snakes, is like the Greek conception of Typhon and the mountain-giants; but in both we can see variants of a well-known ancient type, the devil bound.

The late Prof. George Stephens gave a series of examples of this subject in his volume intended to controvert Prof. S. Bugge's *Studies in Northern Mythology*; and though we need not accept all his conclusions, the

2 C



CROSS-HEADS OF THE GIANT'S GRAVE, PENRITH.

illustrations and information have an especial interest for us, because in that book he showed how the Loki on Gosforth cross and the Bound Devil at Kirkby Stephen were analogous to the devil bound in hell in the tenth century MS. of Cædmon, on the one hand, and on the other to twelfth century sculptures in Denmark and Normandy.

To the examples he gave more have since been added. Mr. P. M. C. Kermodé, F.S.A., Scot., has shown Loki Bound on the Kirk Andreas cross (I.O.M.), and Mr. Calverley suggested (*Early Sculptured Crosses*, p. 247) that the figures dimly seen on the eastern cross of the Giant's Grave at Penrith had a similar meaning—Loki shackled, Sigyn his wife beside him, the serpent over his head, and the Lamb standing above the group. I cannot help thinking that the last may be meant for the sacred Hart with the Hound or Wolf, as in the Dacre shaft (*Early Sculptured Crosses*, p. 114) and at Gosforth (*ibid.* p. 156) but it is not clear; and indeed it matters little to our present purpose. In Fig. 7 I have tried to sketch this from the cross itself, using also the help of a photograph from Mr. Calverley's cast, and restoring in dotted lines the probable shape of the cross-head. Fig. 6 is the other side of the same cross; Fig. 8 is the cross at the other end of the Giant's Grave.

Prof. Stephens thought that this subject might be early Anglian, and put a much more distant date on the Gosforth and other monuments than seems tenable. He might perhaps have found some support to his theory in the form of the Giant's Grave cross-heads, which are free-armed, not wheel-crosses, and—unlike the Thumb and the three Gosforth heads—distinctly connected with that Anglo-Cumbrian group which has a superimposed cross in relief, with bosses in the centre and at the ends of the four little arms. This fashion seems to have begun in the abbey and cathedral cross-heads at Carlisle, and to have run through the north of our district, as shown in the

white stone cross-heads at Beckermet, Bridekirk, Cross-canonby, Dearham, Kirkby Stephen, and Penrith. It is an earlier style than the wheel-head at Gosforth, but with it, at Penrith, we have the Loki group as at Gosforth. The inference appears to be that Anglian population and traditions remained in greater force in the east of Cumberland than in the west, after the Viking settlement, as of course must have been the case, for the invaders came chiefly by sea and settled chiefly on the coast. The Gosforth cross is Norse with Irish motives; the Penrith Giant's Grave is English with Norse motives. Both might be of much the same date, differing only in features which show the style predominating in the neighbourhood. At Halton we have an apparently later cross, wholly Anglian in general design, but with the distinctly foreign story of Sigurd the Volsung told upon it; not proving that the story of Sigurd was known to Angles of the Bewcastle cross period, but that the art traditions of the Bewcastle cross lingered for 300 years, gradually degenerating. We may therefore put all our monuments bearing the Bound Devil into one class, and date them not earlier than the Viking settlement, whatever types of ornament we find in them.

But the notion of Loki or Satan bound, having once taken root, did not easily die out. In the Shetlands, we are told (Sagabook of the Viking Club, iii., p. 7), snow is called "lucky wool," which is obviously parallel to the Danish name of snow, "Loki's oats," and the Icelandic, "Loki's flame." In the same volume (p. 53), the Rev. R. M. Heanley says that in 1858 or 9 he was told by a Lincolnshire witch of a charm against ague—to nail up three horseshoes (points upward), saying verses which began with an invocation to the Trinity, and ended thus :

Thrice I smite with the Holy Crok,
With this mell I thrice do knock,
One for God,
And one for Wod,
And one for Lok.

The holy crock or mell must be Thor's hammer, and the trinity of witchcraft is Thor, Odin, and Loki!

If the very name has lasted so long, the idea must have been well known in the twelfth century in Scandinavian Cumberland as in other countries where the Scandinavian element was strong. In confusing the Land-wight with Loki (if they did so) the descendants of the Vikings, removed by several generations from any living faith in paganism, were not doing much violence to mythology, for both were giant nature-powers. To identify them would be no greater strain on popular belief than identifying Loki with the Satan of the Bible. Whether the four monsters of the Tullie House stone represent ideas such as those of the Icelandic story or not, in this shackled giant we have one more example of a curious series—another link between ancient Cumbria and Scandinavia, and a fresh illustration of Christian symbolism in a dark age.
