WALL PAINTINGS AT KIRKBY HALL.
ART. XXIV.—Wall Paintings at Kirkby Hall. By H. S. Cowper, F.S.A.

Read at Kirkby Hall, 14 June, 1894.

The space of wall between the floor and wall plate in the chapel at Kirkby Hall is about 7 feet, and probably all this space, except where broken by windows, fireplace, and doors, was at one time painted. What remains at the present day is unfortunately very fragmentary. The paintings throughout are on the plaster which covers the rough walling of Silurian stone. The work on the east wall is best preserved. Here we find in the northern bay (Plate No. I.) the Lord’s Prayer above, and below two panels. The first contains in the centre a tree trunk, from which spread, palm-like, eight displayed peacock plumes. On either side of the tree below the plumes stand two strange looking birds, with tails like cocks, and with their long necks crossed. Behind them are distant trees, and beneath them what appears to be a house.

The second panel like the first, and like all which are well enough preserved to make anything of, contains the tree of peacock plumes, and beneath it a strange double bodied monster biting with its two reversed heads its two uptwisted tails. The heads of this monster appear jackal like, and are affixed to very long necks, which are joined at the shoulder and encircled by one ornate collar. One of the bodies of this fearful beast is standing and the other seated, and both are four legged.

Coming to the southern bay on the same side (Plate No. II.) we find the Ten Commandments * above, and

*These begin "... the commandments of God," and the commandments then follow.

The ninth commandment is worded "Thou shalt not bere no false wutnesse against thy neighbour."
below there are the remains of three panels. In each the peacock plumes tree as before. The first also contains an eared and beaked head (apparently that of a griffin) holding in its beak a horse shoe. Its body is covered with feathers, and at the bottom of the panel can be discerned claws or feet.

The principal object in the next panel is a large pigeon which stands at the foot of the tree. Another bird of smaller dimensions and shaped something like a heron stands on the sinister side of the tree, and stretches its head towards the back of the pigeon. It may be meant to be in the distance, but its head is in front of the tree trunk. In the bottom dexter corner and close in front of the pigeon are three houses, probably meant to be in the distance. In the third panel on this side nothing remains but the plumes.

Each of these panels is contained within a sort of framing consisting of columns surmounted by ornate globe-like capitals, from which spring the two cusps of a trefoil arch, which is cut off by a border which separates it from the Lord’s Prayer and Commandments above. The columns however which are ornamented below the capitals with a conventional pattern, are continued through to the border, where they are terminated with large lions’ heads. Between the capitals and the lions’ heads each of these upper columns are decorated with two or three oblong windows. Below all the panels is a continuous band of a sort of diamond cheque pattern.* This decorated bordering, dividing and enclosing the panels, seems to have been at one time continuous all round the chapel, and uniform, except in the colouring and in the size of the panels, as those in the north bay

* This pattern is most like an imitation in colour of the Norman square billet moulding.
measure about 4 ft. 7 in. by 2 ft. 4 in., while those in the south bay are only 3 ft. 8 in. by 2 ft. 2 in.

On the south end of the room where the window is, the panels, if they ever existed, are gone. On a level with the other inscriptions is the Creed.

On the west side all is obliterated.

The north end has two doors in it, but faint traces of the panels are visible. Above is a long text much destroyed, but showing parts of 5th chapter of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians, verses 16-21 (Plate No. III). Mr. J. R. Dore, of Huddersfield, informs me that the version is that of (Cranmer's) Great Bible of May, 1541, and has kindly supplied me with the unreadable parts of the text from that version. The only difference is in the spelling of some of the words, and in the use of "by" instead of "in" at the beginning of v. 16. This is, however, sufficiently indistinct to be doubtful.*

The inscription commences with a few almost undecipherable words, which however seem to read "The Epistle to the Galatians?" Then follows:

"I saye walcke by (?) the spyrit (and fulfyl not the lust) of the fleshe. For (the fleshe lusteth contrary to the sprete, and the sprete contrary to ye fleshe. These are contraye one to the other so ye) cannot do whatsoever ye woulde. But ye be led of ye spyrite then are ye not under ye lawe. The dedes of ye fleche are manfeste whyche are these adultry forniciacion unclennesse wantonnesse worshypping of ymages wytchcraft hatred varyaunce zeale wrathe (sedecyon sects) enuivng mordre dronckennes glottonie and soche lyke of the whych I tel (you before as I have told you in tyme past, that they which comyt such things, shal not be inherytoures of the kyngdo of God.)"

The colours used in these paintings are not bright. The peacock plumes being black or slatey blue, with

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*Mr. Dore, who has most kindly searched his collection of old versions of the Bible to identify the passage, informs me that the following versions have not been examined: Tyndale, 1525, and Coverdale, 1535.
brick red spots. The lions' heads are brick red, and the cusps of the arches alternately brick red and white. The animals and birds are left the colour of the plaster and the detail of feathers, &c., outlined in black. The inscriptions are in black letter, with some of the capitals in red.

*In Tweddell's "Furness, Past and Present," I. p. 153, it is stated that the chapel floor is not original, "as the decorations upon the walls comprising the arms of the Kirkljs in their various quarterings, are divided by joists and plaster." I leave the reader to judge for himself if these frescoes are heraldic. There seems to be reason to suppose the floor level has been altered.
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