

ON A REMARKABLE SCULPTURE LATELY FOUND IN BOBBING
CHURCH, KENT.

DURING the autumn of 1863 extensive repairs took place in the parish church of Bobbing, Kent. In the course of the work a piece of fine oolitic stone, most probably from Caen, about 2 feet 4 inches in length, and about 6 inches in its greatest width throughout, having at one end the sculpture represented in the woodcuts, was found in the south wall of the chancel, forming the quoin of the western jamb of the sedilia.¹ These recessed seats consisted of an arcade of the Decorated period in three compartments, separated by small columns; and at each end was a similar column attached to the jamb. The figures are 10 inches in height. From them downwards the continuation of the angle between them is chamfered off to form a narrow face, and that and the two sides below the figures are carved with ornamental work, of which a portion is shown in the woodcuts. The two sides opposite to these (supposing a section of the stone when in block to have been a square) had been cut away to form a cavetto moulding and a hollow to receive an engaged column, so as to correspond exactly with the eastern jamb. It should seem therefore probable that the stone was either taken from some other part of the church, or brought from some other church, with the sculpture and carving on it, and worked up for a portion of the sedilia. The top and also the bottom were plain, although not smooth. Mortar or cement might have been applied to them, but there was no appearance of any stone or other object having ever been attached to either of them. However, the stone may have been shortened to adapt it to the place it occupied in the sedilia. What the construction may have been of which it originally formed part, it is difficult to conjecture.

Bobbing is a small village, and the church one of moderate

¹ The woodcuts accompanying this notice have been executed from photographs very successfully taken by Mr. H. G. Pilcher of Sittingbourne.



Sculpture found in 1863, in the Parish Church of Bobbing, Kent.

dimensions in the Decorated style throughout, but by no means enriched with ornament in any part. The sculpture is evidently of earlier date. A shrine naturally occurs to the mind, but there is no known historical or other evidence, or even any tradition, of there having ever existed any shrine at Bobbing, or of there having been any saint, image, or relic specially venerated there.

The stone was placed in the wall in a perpendicular position with the sculptured figures downwards, and the sculpture and ornamental carving inwards, so as to be wholly concealed. It is not improbable that this re-application of the fragment to a sacred purpose may have been regarded as a becoming, if not reverential, mode of disposing of it. The position of the sculpture was, no doubt, reversed in order to get a plain surface on which to work the cavetto moulding corresponding to that on the other jamb.

No other stone was found in the course of the repairs, which had any appearance of having formed other part of the same construction as the stone in question. As soon as this fragment was discovered, it was taken to the house of the Vicar, the Rev. G. J. Simpson, to whom we are indebted for these particulars; and there the mortar and dirt which adhered to it were carefully removed by him. It has since been replaced exactly where it was found, but in its proper position, and with the jamb cut away sufficiently to leave the sculpture and the ornamental carving open to inspection.

The sculpture is probably of about the middle of the twelfth century. The subject of it will be seen to be a sainted bishop, holding in his left hand a pastoral staff, and apparently giving the benediction with his right to a tonsured figure who has a book, and is bowing his head and raising his left hand in a manner expressive of great reverence. This may probably have been intended as a representation of the ordination of a deacon. According to the practice of the twelfth century in regard to that rite, the deacon stood while the bishop delivered to him a copy of the Gospels, and pronounced the form of words used in an ordination of that kind. There was formerly great diversity in the mode of conferring that order in different churches; see Martene de Antiquis Ritibus, lib. i. cap. viii. art. viii. In later times the usage was more uniform, and the bishop commonly placed a stole on the neck of the

candidate for the order of deacon before delivering to him the Gospel.² In this sculpture no stole appears; but, seeing the conventionality of the subject, and how little uniformity there was for a long time in this ordination, the absence of the stole is not conclusive against this view of the significance of what is represented.

The inscription over the bishop, read with the contractions extended and the last letter supplied, is SANCTUS MARCIALIS PIUS PATRONUS. The word "patronus" was sometimes used for "episcopus;" but it may here have been used to signify also the ecclesiastical relation of the bishop to the deacon whom he is ordaining. The inscription over the latter is missing, except probably the final letter, for an L precedes the inscription over the bishop. It was most likely the name of the person whom the bishop appears to be addressing, and was begun near the middle of the space, and carried into the other compartment to show more clearly that the two figures formed one subject.

St. Martial was one of the first apostles of France, having been sent thither from Rome, with several others, about the year 250. He was the first bishop of Limoges, and his name is famous in martyrologies. Little, however, is known of him, and no real or legendary incident in his life has been discovered that throws any light on the subject of this sculpture.

The representations of St. Martial most frequently portray the sainted bishop standing near an altar, and receiving from St. Valerie her head, which had been cut off. The Abbe Texier gives an example of this subject from the enameled shrine of St. Valerie; date thirteenth century. It occurs likewise in painted glass of the fourteenth century published by the Comte de Lasteyrie, and in a bas-relief on a tomb of the same period.³ St. Martial is also sometimes figured in the act of extinguishing a conflagration. In a beautiful sepulchral memorial of a priest at Chénerailles in the ancient Limousin, a sculpture of the thirteenth century, the saint is seen ascending the steps of a kind of throne or elevated platform, on which is a figure of the B. V. Mary, and swinging a censer. In this curious subject St. Martial

² See Canon Rock's *Church of Our Fathers*, vol. iii. part ii. p. 51.

³ Texier, *Essai sur les argentiers et les émailleurs de Limoges*, plates v. and vi.; *Histoire de la Peinture sur Verre*,

par le Comte de Lasteyrie, pl. xliii.; Batissier, *Hist. de l'Art Monumental*, part ii. plate at the end of the volumes; see also Guénebauld's useful *Dictionnaire Iconographique*, col. 401.

appears to be associated with the martyrdom of St. Cyr and his mother St. Julitta.⁴

There are some peculiarities of ecclesiastical costume which this sculpture may serve to illustrate, not undeserving, perhaps, of examination. In the episcopal figure may be noticed, first, the singular mitre, low and, for the period, unusually pointed, the two points moreover being somewhat widely separated. It appears to exemplify a fashion of transition between the low mitre of the twelfth century, worn so that the *apices* or horns are at the sides, the intervening depression being over the forehead when seen full-face. Not long after the mitre seems, as it were, to have been turned partly round, so that one *apex* was over the brows, and the other at the back of the head. A curious example of the low bifid mitre of the eleventh century, copied from a MS. in the Barberini library, is given by d'Agincourt, pl. lv. These peculiarities are well illustrated by episcopal seals. As instances of the fashion first described may be cited the seal of Ralph, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1114, and also that of Thomas à Becket, 1162, published by Mr. Gough Nichols in the Gentleman's Magazine, on which the outline of the upper part of the mitre is a regular crescent.⁵ Other examples are supplied by the seals of Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, 1123, and Robert his successor, 1147; also by those of two bishops of Exeter, Robert, 1128, and John the Chantor, 1186. In France we may notice, among numerous examples of a like fashion, the seals of Rotrodus, Archbishop of Rouen, 1166, and William, Archbishop of Rheims, 1168. An early illustration of the low mitre pointed in front is supplied by the seal of William de Longchamp, bishop of Ely, 1191. We may next observe, in the figure of St. Martial at Bobbing, the absence of the amice, which is invariably to be seen in later times with its stiff *parura* at first sight appearing like a collar of the chasuble, and with small folds in front where the *parura* opens on the throat. In this sculpture the chasuble seems to have a broad em-

⁴ See the description of this remarkable monument by the Abbé Texier, Didron, *Annales Archéol.* t. ix. p. 203. St. Martial is represented in an engraving by Seb. Leclere kneeling before an altar: above is seen a ray of light and the inscription—"D. J. C., pastor bone,

commendo tibi oves quas mihi tradidisti." See also the *Manuel d'Épigraphie et Recueil des Inscriptions du Limousin*, by the Abbe Texier, Poitiers, 1851.

⁵ *Gent. Mag.* vol. xxx. N. S. p. 494.

broidered margin around the neck, terminating in a collar which turns over and forms a little roll under the chin in an unusual fashion. In the earlier representations of bishops, it may be observed, that the amice is not shown; thus, in the representation of Egbert in an *Evangelary* of the tenth century at Treves,⁶ the chasuble has a broad margin brought to a point in front upon the throat, and carried up behind the head like a hood thrown back upon the neck. It can, indeed, scarcely be affirmed that this is not an early form of the amice, but its appearance is dissimilar to that of the vestment in question at a subsequent period. Another curious representation of pontifical usages at the same period, in regard to the ornamented collar of the chasuble and the non-appearance of the amice, is to be found in a *Pontifical* at Rouen.⁷ It is worthy of observation that in both these instances last mentioned the bishop is seen without a mitre. That pontifical ornament is not mentioned in the earlier rituals in the ordination of bishops. Some learned liturgical writers are of opinion that the mitre was scarcely adopted before A.D. 1000.⁸

The effigy attributed to Maurice, Archbishop of Rouen, who died in 1235, but possibly of somewhat earlier date, represents a prelate vested in sumptuous pontificals; the upper part of the bust and also the shoulders are covered by a rich deep embroidery with a small erect collar. This last may possibly represent the amice, although indistinctly. The fine monumental statue in question at Rouen cathedral may seem, in these features of its details, to present certain analogies with the episcopal figure at Bobbing.⁹

Under the chasuble in which St. Martial is vested there appears a garment with wide sleeves and open at the sides, resembling the dalmatic, but with this exception, that it reaches to the feet, where the skirt terminates in a broad

⁶ De Vigne, *Costumes du moyen âge*, tom. i. pl. 72.

⁷ See the Memoir by the late Mr. Gage Rokewode, *Archæologia*, vol. xxv. pl. 29. Among many illustrations of the early form of the mitre, very low and without peaks, three figures of bishops in Cott. MS. Nero C. IV., Anglo-Norman art about 1120, may specially be cited. This illumination has been well reproduced in Shaw's *Dresses*, vol. i.

⁸ Compare the figures of Hedda, Bishop of Winchester, and St. Guthlac, in *Harl. Charter V. 6*, faithfully reproduced in Shaw's *Dresses*, vol. i. The broad jeweled collar of the chasuble, as it there appears to be, stands up behind the head forming an angular peak. The date of this drawing is late in the twelfth century.

⁹ *Tombeaux de la Cathédrale de Rouen*, par A. Deville, pl. iv. p. 35.

orfray or embroidered bordure, and the sleeves have likewise at the wrists bands of similar ornament. Although in other representations of pontifical vestments both the tunic and dalmatic commonly appear reaching only to the knee, or a little below it, there can scarcely be a doubt that the sculptor here intended to represent one of those episcopal garments. Lastly, the termination of the stole, as it must probably be considered, may be noticed under the chasuble, its fringe reaching as low as the margin of the skirt at the feet. One end only is indicated, which may have occurred through an oversight of the artist, possibly to be attributed to the diminutive dimensions of the figure. Its breadth is, however, so great that possibly the sculptor intended to represent the two ends of the stole, but has omitted the line of separation. The head of the pastoral staff has unfortunately been broken off; it seems to have turned outwards. The outline of the pointed ferrule may however be distinguished, and it recalls the verse inscribed at Toulouse over a sculptured figure of St. Saturnin—

Curva trahit quos recta regit, pars ultima pungit.

The supposed deacon, as will be seen by the woodcut, is tonsured; his hair and short beard are arranged in small regular locks, and carefully chiseled, though imperfectly shown in the cut. He is vested in a loose garment reaching to the feet; over this is a kind of mantle falling in ample folds. Around its collar, which seems to stand up and turn slightly over at its margin around the neck, in like manner as that of the bishop's vestment before described, there is a band of simple ornament or embroidery; no fastening is indicated at the throat. Under the right arm there is a book, doubtless the *Textus* or Gospels delivered to the deacon at ordination; in the hand, which does not touch the book, a fold of drapery is held up, possibly, as has been suggested, with a certain reverential intention of which we see examples in works of early art. It should seem to have been thought indecorous to hold the Gospels, or any object of very sacred character, in the bare hand. Not unfrequently the *textus* is to be seen wrapped in a covering termed *camisia*.¹

It may be difficult to ascertain what were the garments

¹ See Ducange, *v. Camisiæ librorum*, and *v. Armigeri*; edit. Henschel, tom. i. col. 401.

which the sculptor here intended to represent. The proper attire of the deacon in early times is indicated by the Pontifical of Ecgberht, Archbishop of York, in the eighth century. They are thus specified in the prayer for their consecration ;—"hanc planetam famuli tui ill. seu pudorem" (*s. poderem*) "albam ac stolam, cingulum orariumque dextera tua sancta benedicere digneris."² There is, however, no slight difficulty in satisfactorily identifying these liturgical garments respectively. The first is usually explained as signifying the chasuble, which seems sometimes to have been thus designated, but here it appears distinct from the *casula*, with which in the context the priest is stated to have been vested at ordination. In the Saxon Glossary attributed to Elfric, Archbishop of Canterbury A.D. 996, we find,—"*planeta, cæppe, i. cappa seu pallium.*" The *poderis* above mentioned was doubtless, as its name expresses, a long garment reaching to the feet,—"*tunica talaris,*"—and, according to Canon Rock, identical with the *subucula*, which was worn, as we learn from the canons enacted in the reign of Edgar, under the alb,³ and properly to be distinguished from it, although confounded with that vestment by some later writers. Thus, likewise, in an Anglo-Saxon Pontifical in the Public Library at Rouen attributed to the tenth century, the prayer for their benediction at the consecration of a church enumerates the following : "*planetam ac casulam, atque superhumerales, seu poderem, albam ac stolam, cingulum orariumque.*" We here learn that the term *superhumerales*, usually considered to denote the pall or an ornament resembling it and attached to the chasuble, designated also a long garment such as the *poderis* before noticed. The priestly vestment called *superindumentum* or *superhumerales* is thus described by Eucherius, bishop of Lyons in the fifth century,—"*est velut in caracallæ modum, sed sine cuculo ; cujus vestimenti duo sunt genera, unum lineum et simplex, quod sacerdotes habebant, aliud diversis coloribus et auro gemmisque contextum, quo soli pontifices utebantur.*"⁵

² Martene, Ant. Eccl. Rit. lib. i. c. viii., vol. ii. p. 34, edit. Bassani, 1788. See also Canon Rock's Church of our Fathers, vol. iii. part ii. p. 51.

³ Ancient Laws of England, edit. Thorpe, vol. ii. p. 250. Church of our Fathers, vol. i. p. 460.

⁴ Archæologia, vol. xxv. p. 262. The representations of a bishop and deacons in the miniatures in this MS. are well deserving of careful examination. Ibid. plates 29, 30.

⁵ See Ducange, *v. Superhumerales*, and other authorities there cited.

On careful comparison of the foregoing passages it may seem probable that the ecclesiastic portrayed in the curious sculpture at Bobbing is a deacon, wearing either the *poderis* or the alb, and over it a kind of cope without a hood ("in caracallæ modum"), and differing chiefly from the pontifical cope in being of more simple character. It is remarkable that there is no indication of the stole, so specially associated with the ordination of a deacon, but it must be remembered that the stole was customarily placed upon the left shoulder of the postulant, and it may therefore be supposed to be concealed under the upper garment represented in this sculpture. It was only when the deacon became a priest that the bishop placed the stole about his neck so that its two ends fell in equal lengths on both sides in front of the wearer, as commonly seen in sepulchral portraitures and other representations of ecclesiastics.

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