

THE SCULPTURES IN THE LADY CHAPEL AT ELY.¹

By M. R. JAMES.

The series of sculptured groups which surround the Lady Chapel at Ely represent, as we might naturally be inclined to expect from the history of the building which contains them, the Life and Miracles of the Virgin Mary ; and sadly mutilated as they are (there is hardly a head left to one of the three or four hundred figures,) it has been possible by an examination of written documents, and by comparison of contemporary figured monuments, to identify a considerable number of the scenes represented.

Of these written documents and contemporary monuments, I must say some few words before I proceed to any explanation of the sculptures before us. The principal source which our artist (or his monastic director) used in illustrating the Life of the Virgin was a certain *Liber de infantia B. V. Mariæ et Salvatoris*, which you will find well edited in Tischendorf's *Evangelia Apocrypha* under the name *Pseudo Matthæi Evangelium* ; an English translation is readily accessible in the collection of Apocryphal Gospels translated by B. Harris Cowper, or Walker, the latter in Clark's *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*. This book is a compilation in Latin from earlier sources ; some letters prefixed to it call it a translation from Hebrew by S. Jerome ; but I need hardly tell you that these are spurious letters, and quite without historical value. The real sources of the book are early Greek documents : firstly, a book known as the Protevangelium, or Book of James, which was written early in the second century, and treats of the birth of the Virgin and of our Lord ; secondly, the Gospel of Thomas, also a second-century book, which narrates the miracles of our Lord's infancy—but this Gospel of Thomas lay before our writer in a more complete form than any which we now possess ; and thirdly, the author of the *Liber de infantia* added a certain amount of matter,

¹ Read in the Lady Chapel at Ely, August 16, 1892.

though probably not a great deal, from his own imagination. For that part of the series of Sculptures which illustrates the Miracles of the Virgin, our artist used as his source some collection of miracles which, up to the present moment, I have not been able to identify. And, though I regret this fact, I am not very much surprised at it; for the number of such collections of miracles which existed in the fourteenth century was very large. Hardly any collections of MSS. of any size does not contain several; and in England, the country especially devoted to the worship of our Lady, you would probably find a larger number than in any other part of the world. I would refer for a corroboration of this statement, to Mr. G. F. Warner's excellent introduction to the *Miracles de Notre Dame*, printed for the Roxburghe Club. But I can say definitely that our artist's source was not any of the most famous collections. He was not using Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale*, nor the *Golden Legend*, nor Caesarius of Heisterbach, nor Étienne de Bourbon, nor (I think) Gauthier de Coincy, nor Eadmer, nor Adgar, nor, in fact, any printed collection that I have seen. I have little doubt, however, that it will be easily possible in the future to identify the work which he did use.

Of contemporary figured monuments which illustrate this series of sculptures I have also to say something. Three series of manuscript illuminations are known to me, all of which must have been executed in England within a few years of the date of this chapel; and two of them in particular shew a marked resemblance to our series here, so strong, indeed, that I am almost certain that their designers had the same unidentified collection of miracles before them.

The first is a series of beautiful drawings on the lower margin of the pages of a folio copy of the Decretals, which once belonged to the Dominicans of S. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, and is now among the Royal MSS. in the British Museum (10 E. iv). This MS. was, I have no doubt, written in Italy and illuminated in England. The lower margin of the pages are pictured throughout the book with several series of subjects, *e.g.*, the History of Joseph, illustrations of Romances, of Natural History, of Sports and Pastimes, of the Miracles of the Virgin, and of

the Life of S. Mary of Egypt. The second series, also on the lower margins of pages, is in a MS. acquired in recent years by the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge. It is known as the Carew-Poyntz *Horae*, and was executed for a follower of the Black Prince in 1360. The various series of subjects in this book are Bible History, from the Creation to the Martyrdom of Isaiah, the Life of the Virgin and of our Lord, and the Miracles of the Virgin.

The third series, first in point of artistic merit, but not quite so closely illustrative of our sculptures, are on the lower margin of the MS. known as Queen Mary's Prayer Book (Royal MS. 2 B. vii, in the British Museum). These lovely drawings illustrate mainly (*a*) grotesque and genre subjects, (*b*) the Miracles of the Virgin, (*c*) the Lives of Saints, following the order of the Kalendar, and of certain special saints, S. Thomas of Canterbury, S. Mary Magdalene, S. Paul, S. Margaret, S. Nicholas.¹

I will remark, in concluding this part of my subject, that England possesses two fine series of the Miracles of the Virgin belonging to the end of the fifteenth century—one in fresco in Eton College Chapel (now only accessible in pencil drawings), the other also in fresco in the Lady Chapel of Winchester Cathedral, engraved by Carter, and also in the Winchester volume of the proceedings of this Society. The written source employed by the artists of both is well known: it is Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*.

We must proceed now to the sculptures themselves. The arrangement of them does not call for much remark. The lower range of the wall all round the building is divided into canopied niches, there are twenty (or nineteen) on the north and nineteen (or twenty) on the south side, nine (or eight) at the west end, and eight on the east end. The arrangement at the east end, however, is unlike that on the other three walls. Here there are not so much niches as panels, and these are interrupted by a fifteenth century reredos in the centre; moreover all traces of sculptured groups have entirely disappeared, although it is evident that there were groups originally, for the grounds

¹For that part of the series of sculptures which illustrates the Nativity and the Flight into Egypt, the Italian drawings

from a Milan M.S. facsimiled by Ceriani (*Canonical Histories and Apocryphal Legends*) should be consulted.

on which the figures stood remain. It is possible, to my thinking, that the east end groups were in some material superior to the clunch in which all the rest of the work is done, possibly alabaster. In any case, the east end sculptures will not occupy us further.

The niches on the other three sides, each contain three figure sculptures, two groups on the spandrels of the canopy and a small standing or seated figure inside the niche. We will take these niche figures first: there are eight, four on the north and four on the south, which are of larger size than the rest, and seated, and in most cases crowned. One, on the south, has a harp, the lower end of it enclosed, as is usual, in a leather case. This is plainly King David, and we may fairly conclude that these eight carved seated figures represent the genealogy of the Virgin. The rest of the niche figures are all ecclesiastics, mostly bishops, sometimes carrying crosiers, but in no case that I have detected is any one of them possessed of anything which leads to a certain identification. Whether they are ecclesiastics, connected with the Church of Ely, or whether they are Doctors of the Church, I am quite unable to decide. But they do not seem to have any distinct connection with the sculptured group above them.

The sequence of the sculptured groups is apparently throughout from left to right, and as the largest continuous series begins in the middle of the south side, it will be best to start from the south east corner of the building. I shall describe the mutilated groups as accurately as I can, and add my explanations as briefly as may be.

The Roman numbers refer to the niche; the letters A, B, to the left and right hand groups respectively.

South East.

- i. A.B. Both groups are quite cut away.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

- ii. A. Under architecture. *L*, an altar with chalice on it; in front of this a Bishop with crosier (the head of which is a round object, apparently detached, above: kneeling to him is another man or an ecclesiastic (?), to the right are three spectators or worshippers. The Bishop is, perhaps, husselling the kneeling figure.

On the right of the building is another group of two

figures ; a seated ecclesiastic and a man standing or kneeling before him.

B. Under architecture, on *R*, an altar ; a prelate (the hero of group A ?) kneels to it ; one stands behind him with his left hand raised.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

iii. A. On *L*, a standing Angel scourging a kneeling man who is stripped to the waist : then a standing figure almost gone ; on *R*, an altar, and on it a seated figure of the Virgin (?).

This seems capable of identification, but I do not feel at all certain of the subject ; evidently an ecclesiastic is here doing penance for some offence against the Virgin. Not impossibly he may be Abp. Sisebutus of Toledo, who was smitten (and died) for wearing the chasuble, given by the Virgin to his predecessor, S. Hildephonsus.

B. On *R*, a nun and a man in blue and red, with hawk on wrist, converse ; on *L*, an ecclesiastic (?).

The hawk is gone, but a blank, uncoloured space of the shape of the bird remains.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

Opposite this point are the altar-steps.

iv. A. On *R*, a Church-tower ; an angel presents a kneeling nun before an altar, by which is another figure.

These two groups seem to contain the story of an erring nun reconciled by the Virgin's intervention. There was one such, a "soucretaine" of her convent, who left the cloister and lived in the world for years, and on returning penitent, found that the Virgin had assumed her shape and been doing her work in her absence.

B. On *L*, a city-gate. In front of it a demon standing (his clawed feet only remain) ; his front claw rests on the head of a figure standing with hawk on wrist by a tree ; this tree is clasped by a kneeling figure with a round hat in his hand.

This is probably Theophilus selling his soul to the devil. The story (which may be found at length in many books, e.g., Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*) is this : Theophilus, the respected "vice-dominus" of a church in Cilicia, is turned out of office by an incoming Bishop. In chagrin and despair, he is induced by a Jewish wizard to sell his soul to the devil. He is restored to

office, for the devil inspires the Bishop to reinstate him. Then he realises his peril, and spends night after night in prayer to the Virgin. She appears and restores him the bond he had signed ; and shortly after he confesses his sin in public and dies.

Niche figure, Crowned King seated ; he has curly hair.

v. A. On *L*, two horsemen look at a small figure (Theophilus) who kneels to an altar on which is the Virgin.

B. Theophilus (?) presented to a seated hairy demon. Behind him are two horsemen in attitudes of surprise ; near them a tree and demon.

A door here takes the place of a niche.

vi. A. The Virgin attended by an angel. On the *L*, under clouds, kneels Theophilus (or a woman) on two steps.

If the kneeling figure is Theophilus, the scene will be his reconciliation ; if it be a woman, the scene belongs to those which follow.

B. Three women ; two at least are nuns in black. One has her head on a pillow, and the Virgin stands behind her. On *R* is the Virgin standing on a devil (his lower half plunged in flames) ; an angel by her.

Niche figure, a Bishop with crosier.

vii. A. Two groups ; on *L*, three women (2 nuns ?) one with a box.

On *R*, a Bishop seated ; a nun kneels to him, one figure stands behind him.

In these two (or three) groups we have, I think, the unedifying story of an Abbess who was delivered of a child ; the Virgin took the child and sent it to a hermit to bring up ; two of the nuns accused the Abbess to the Bishop, but when she was tried he could find no fault in her.

B. The Virgin attended by an angel : an object or figure on the *R* is gone.

Niche figure a Bishop with crosier.

viii. A. The Virgin holding in her hands the two feet of a man in bed (who has disappeared) ; an angel attends her.

B. A man with his legs crossed over a stool or trestle, is supported by another man : a third man in front ; on *L*, a smaller figure.

Either one or two stories are shown here: there is a common story of the Virgin healing a woodcutter who had almost cut off his leg: and there is another of a man afflicted in the leg with the "mal des ardents" to whom the Virgin and S. Hippolytus gave a new leg.

Niche figure, larger size, the king has his legs crossed and a sword in the *R*, a glove in the *L* hand.

ix. A. The Virgin and an angel appear to a man asleep before an altar.

B. *L* An angel and two figures. *R*, the left-hand cup of a balance (held by the angel?) containing what may be either a building or a loaf of bread, the right hand cup is being pulled down by several little devils. Above, is a headless half-length figure bending down out of clouds (it resembles a tree) to receive a soul, as it seems.

This and the last shew a vision, as I think, vouchsafed to an usurer by the Virgin: a loaf of bread which he had once given away outweighed all his sins when they came to be weighed.

Niche figure, a Bishop in chasuble.

At this point the colouring of the carving abruptly ceases, and here too, a well-defined and continuous series of scenes from the Virgin's life begins, and is continued up to group iv. A on the north side.

x. A. Joachim's offering rejected by the High Priest who stands behind the altar and repulses him.

The reason was that Joachim and Anne, afterwards the Virgin's parents, were at this time childless.

In the centre of the canopy are four figures looking at this scene, and no doubt inserted here to mark the beginning of the new series of subjects.

B. An angel, a man and a woman; probably Joachim and Anne escorted home by an angel.

Niche figure a Bishop.

xi. A. An angel appears to Joachim: shepherds and sheep on *R*.

B. An angel appears to Anne: on *L* are 2 figures, one probably the maid Judith, who taunted her mistress with barrenness.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

xii. A. Three figures (shepherds of Joachim), sheep on *R*, and hills.

B. Joachim and Anne meet (at the Temple gate): hills behind.

Niche-figure, of the larger size, seated.

xiii. A. The birth of the Virgin; Anne in bed.

B. The presentation of the Virgin in the Temple.

The Priest stands by an altar on the top of a flight of 15 steps, on which is the Virgin, her parents stand by. This easily decipherable sculpture first gave me the key to the interpretation of the series.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

xiv. A. The Virgin brought up in the temple: a curtain is prominent, behind which is an angel handing to her a boat-shaped dish (containing food); three maidens are with her.

According to *Ps. Matt.* iv., the Virgin was brought up in the temple and fed by angels, and in c. viii., after her marriage to Joseph, we read of five maidens accompanying her home, viz. Rebecca, Saphora, Susanna, Abigea, Zahel.

B. The Virgin, two men, and a Priest; probably the High Priest sending for the suitors.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

xv. A. The Virgin married to Joseph by the Priest; a curtain behind.

B. The Priest and four other figures; probably the High Priest dismissing the suitors.

Niche figure, King David seated with harp, the lower part in a leather case.

xvi. A. The Virgin and an angel: almost certainly the Annunciation though so unobtrusively represented; it has been cut flat to the wall to make room for a tablet.

On *R* is what may be a figure of the Virgin setting out for the hill country.

B. The Visitation; hills behind.

Niche figure.

xvii. A. Three figures; an angel, a man and the Virgin: this is the reconciliation of Joseph to the Virgin after his unjust suspicions. See *Ps. Matt.* xi.

B. Two figures behind an altar; in front of it, the Virgin and another. Probably the High Priest administering the water of jealousy to the Virgin and Joseph. See *Ps. Matt.* xii.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

xviii. A. The Virgin on an ass, preceded by Joseph (who carries his stick with his cloak on it over his shoulder), and by an angel : in front of him are two figures (or faces ; one is complete and seems to be weeping).

This represents the journey to Bethlehem: the two figures in front are the laughing and weeping people seen by the Virgin, and explained by an angel to signify the Jews and Gentiles. *Ps. Matt. xiii.*

I think this representation must be unique in western art ; I have never seen any other attempt to figure the incident.

B. Joseph, with the ass : The Virgin, dismounted, with the angel (who is leading her to the cave of the Nativity). *Ps. Matt. xiii. § 2.*

Niche figure.

xix. A. The Virgin in bed ; Joseph looking up. Two Angels : the Manger on the *R.* The Nativity.

B. An angel speaks to two shepherds ; star above.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

(xx the Corner Stall), A. The Virgin shows the child to some kneeling figures—shepherds or Magi.

B. Mounted figures ; the Magi on their journey.

*Niche figure, none.**West End.*

i. A. An angel ; the rest gone ; probably the appearance to Joseph to warn him to fly.

B. A seated figure and one standing ; Herod giving orders for the Massacre.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

ii. A. Three figures ; two seem to be struggling ; probably the Massacre of the Innocents.

B. The flight into Egypt ; in the foreground, two Dragons. See *Ps. Matt. xviii.-xx.*, where it is said that a number of dragons came out of a cave and did obeisance to our Lord.

Finial figure, none : there seem to have been figures on six of the canopies at the west end, instead of niche figures : only one is left.

iii. A. An angel (?) near an oak tree, a lamb on *L* ; near the tree a large dragon. Probably part of the same scene as the last.

B. A fragment of two animals (? oxen : a yoke of oxen is mentioned in *Ps. Matt.* l. c.); the Virgin and two figures.

Finial figure, a Bishop.

iv. A. The Virgin (?) stands on a demon (his face is complete) by a tree ; an angel attends her.

This may refer to the fall of idols on the entrance of the Holy Family into Egypt (*Ps. Matt.* xxiii., xxiv.); but this and the next three groups are not at all clear to me.

B. The Virgin (?) and two figures, the second slightly bent. Possibly the Egyptian governor Affrodosius adoring the Virgin (*Ps. Matt.* xxiv.).

Finial figure, gone.

v. A. The Angel and Joseph (?) ; a third figure on *R* is gone.

B. One kneeling at an altar ; two figures (Angel and Virgin) in the foreground. Possibly connected with the Presentation.

Finial figure, gone.

vi. A. The Baptism of our Lord ; a figure with a scroll (a prophet) and two others.

This and the following groups seem to me to indicate the most prominent events in our Lord's life ; the prophets who foretold them are represented, and the Virgin ; but not always the event itself.

B. The Virgin fainting (?), David, with harp, behind ; probably this indicates the Crucifixion ; the Crucifix may have been sculptured on the mutilated finial of the canopy.

Finial figure, gone.

vii. A. The Virgin swooning (?) ; a figure looking up ; possibly indicates the Deposition from the Cross.

B. The Virgin led by another (? S. John) ; a prophet with scroll behind : perhaps indicates the entombment.

Finial figure, gone.

viii. A. The Virgin looking up ; a Prophet with scroll ; if, as I think, the Ascension is here indicated, the prophet is Amos (his words "qui aedificat ascensiones suas in terris" are taken to refer to the Ascension).

B. Two figures, Apostles (?) ; this, with the following five groups, seems to give a procession of Apostles assembling at the Death of the Virgin.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

ix. (Corner Stall) A. Figure with scroll and raised hand : a second figure (with face extant), curly haired, carrying a book in the well-known "bag" binding.

B. Two more figures.

Niche figure, none.

North Side.

i. A. One figure holding up his garment : another figure has gone.

B. A figure carrying a lantern or book in front of another.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

ii. A. Two figures : the smaller one is on higher ground, and may be the Virgin praying on the Mount of Olives.

B. The Virgin's coffin borne by four Apostles : traces of the Jew who tried to upset the bier, and whose hands clung to it, are visible. Two more Apostles with candles, are in front.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

iii. A. The Virgin in her coffin : three or four figures standing.

B. Two figures, one with scroll : possibly belong to the last scene.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

iv. A. Angels supporting the Virgin in a *mandorla* : the Assumption.

With this scene ends the long and remarkable series of the life of the Virgin : and the miracles recommence with the story of the death of Julian the Apostate. The mediaeval form of his story, as told here, sets forth that S. Basil, threatened by Julian, prayed to the Virgin. Julian was admonished in a vision ineffectually : then a warrior-saint, either S. George or S. Mercurius, was raised from his grave, armed, and sent against Julian, and slew him.

B. An angel stands by a bed in which is a man sitting, in mail (?). This seems to be a vision in which Julian is warned.

Niche figure, of the larger size, seated, crowned.

v. A. The Virgin and angel appear to a man kneeling under a canopy. S. Basil and the Virgin.

B. A man on horseback : three figures in front, one with a book, one is a Bishop, one kneels. S. Basil intercedes with Julian (?).

Niche figure, a Bishop.

vi. A. A figure on throne with three steps on which kneel another : a man behind. S. Basil praying again to the Virgin (?).

B. on *L*, an angel : the Virgin, book in hand, raises a corpse out of a tomb. S. George resuscitated.

Niche-figure, a Bishop.

vii. A. The Virgin, crowned, brings a mounted man towards another on horseback, by whom stands an angel : S. George is armed and sent against Julian.

B. Possibly two scenes. On *L*, are two horsemen, one with a sword, riding rapidly : this may be the end of the Julian story. On *R*, a man with a harp falls off a broken bridge into the water. This, with the next scene, is almost certainly the story of a wicked monk, who, going out of his monastery at night to pursue his evil courses, falls into the river, is drowned, and raised up by the Virgin.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

viii. A. Angel and Virgin crowned, blessing : Below, a figure emerges from the water. The monk raised. To *R*, is a standing figure with hood ; his hands clasped.

B. Two figures seated on a throne, or on steps ; behind one stands a man with writing-case at girdle and book in case ; to *L*, a figure resembling the right-hand figure in A.

Niche figure, of the larger size, seated.

ix. A. Two figures kneel before an altar ; one is seated upon it.

B. On *L*, an angel, then, on a bed, a Bishop asleep holding a vessel ; the Virgin (?) stands over him.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

x. A. Two figures standing, an angel behind ; on *R*, two more figures, one a Bishop (?) kneels facing *L*, one stands back ; on *R*, an altar.

B. An angel standing above a mass of devils ; in front of him stands the Virgin ; on *L*, a broken mass, perhaps of ground, perhaps of devils.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

Of these five groups I can offer no explanation, nor am I at all sure whether they belong to one or more stories.

Those which follow are clearer; they give the story of the Sacristan and the Lady, a tale which has no moral, but was very popular.

It is to be found in the works of Rutebeuf, and in several collections of miracles. A Sacristan elopes with a Knight's wife, is caught by her husband, and imprisoned along with her lover (generally in the stocks). The couple invoke the Virgin; she frees them and fastens two devils in their place. The lady's husband, and the sacristan's fellow-monks on finding the devils in the place of their prisoners—the said prisoners being safe at home—are constrained to believe themselves mistaken, and to apologise.

xi. Here colour begins again.

A. On *L*, several figures, one a nobleman standing, two or three kneeling, they look at one in a surplice at an altar receiving a gift from another. Probably the husband sees the wife bribing the sacristan.

B. On *L*, high up, a horse and man by it; on *R*, under a gable, stand two figures, either the monk and lady imprisoned, or the pair being watched by the husband.

Niche figure, gone.

xii. A broader niche, corresponding to the doorway opposite; very faintly coloured; at the bottom of the crocketing on each side is a demon.

A. *L*. Under architecture on *L*, a hairy-legged demon, his hands tied to a post; the Virgin (?) standing on a 2nd demon. Then two smaller figures (the monk and lady?) broken; behind, an angel doing something to the demon. On *R*, another shaped figure; above, a demon flying off (?). The demons substituted for the prisoners.

R. An ecclesiastic, and a retreating figure; the monk and lady sent home.

B. *L*. A priest and woman in blue.

R. Under architecture, two broken masses; the one on *R*, a demon with claws crossed, *i.e.*, tied. Most likely the discovery of the demons in prison.

Niche figure of the larger size, seated and broken.

xiii. A. A Bishop before a draped altar, on which is an object under a cloth; a female kneeling; two figures hand in hand; two with hands raised.

B. A Bishop at a table in front of the altar, which stands on two steps; behind him, a tall white figure (the Virgin?)

These two groups must, I think, be the story of the Pope who was tempted by Satan in the guise of a woman when he was saying Mass; by way of penance he cut off his hand (or hands), and it was restored to him by the Virgin. This story, which is like and yet unlike, that of S. John Damascene, is copiously illustrated in both the Carew-Poyntz *Horæ* and the Smithfield *Decretals*; but I cannot find the text of it.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

xiv. A. A Bishop kneels to the Virgin (half his face remains). In front is a white vessel, draped, containing other things; on *R*, an angel. Probably this ends the last story.

B. Concealed by the organ.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

xv. A.B. concealed by the organ.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

xvi. A broader niche. A. *L*, a group of three figures; two face *R*, one leads the other; on *L* of them, a single figure. *R*, a church tower, and *L* of it, two figures.

B. *L*, a broken figure. *R*, two figures, one stripping the other.

Niche figure of the larger size, seated.

xvii. A. Under architecture, a Bishop; a woman kneels to him; on *L* three, one kneeling.

B. *L*, a group of two, one kneeling; *R*, a group of two, one is a man.

Niche figure gone.

xviii. A. Two groups much broken. *L*, four figures, one seated; *R*, three figures, one a Bishop, one standing, one seated.

B. A gate, and a figure standing in it. On *R*, two figures, one sending away the other.

Niche figure, a Bishop.

xix. A. Under architecture two groups.

L. A man being baptized in a tub.

R. The Baptizer, and the feet of another figure.

B. Gone.

Niche figure, an ecclesiastic.

This ends the series. It is noticeable that on both North and South sides the Virgin does not appear in the sculptures nearest the East end; and these sculptures, on both sides, appear to be concerned with the doings of an episcopal saint. Who he may be I shall hope to be informed by some other investigator.

It will be seen that there is ample room in the Lady Chapel at Ely for further work of the kind I have tried to do. I have succeeded in finding explanations which appear to myself probable for seventy-one groups. There remain nineteen which I cannot identify at all, and three which are at present inaccessible. It would be difficult to find a more attractive puzzle for archæologists, and I sincerely hope that some one may be fortunate enough to find the key to those parts of it which have baffled me. Only one hint would I venture to offer: that the explorer in this field can hope to do very little without the help of the mediæval authorities, whether monumental or written. The more closely we study the remains of early sacred art, the more frequently do we detect that the smallest details have a meaning, and a meaning which can only be explained by reference to the literary source which guided the artist.

The pictures and sculptures of mediæval times are doubtless more attractive objects of study than the books; but it is my conviction that by far the most reliable results are to be attained by those who will interest themselves in the literature, for it is only by the study of that that they can hope to comprehend fully the spirit of the art.

APPENDIX.

I think it may add somewhat to the practical usefulness of this paper if I annex to it, by way of appendix, a short conspectus of the three series of illustrations of the Virgin's Miracles which I described above. I add a notice of the two fresco-series at Eton and Winchester; and I will *italicise* the items which appear at Ely:—

DECRETALS.

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|---|---|
| <p>1. <i>The story of Theophilus</i>, told in 24 scenes, beginning at f. 162.</p> <p>2. Story of a penitent sinful woman saved, in 16 scenes, f. 177.</p> | <p>3. <i>The Monk and the Lady</i>; 14 scenes, f. 185.</p> <p>4. <i>The story of a drowned nun</i> in 2 scenes, f. 192: at Ely, the hero is a monk, and carries a harp; here, it is a nun, who has a flute.</p> |
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5. *The temptation of the Pope*, in 6 scenes, f. 193. Here, as at Ely, the Pope's hands are cut off at a table.
6. *The Woodman's leg healed*; 2 scenes, f. 196.
Unidentified stories follow from f. 197 to 208 b.
7. The painter and the Devil (see Southey's ballad, the *Pious Painter*); 3 scenes, f. 209.
8. The Jew boy put into an oven by his father and rescued by the Virgin; 8 scenes, f. 210 b.
9. *S. George and the Emperor Julian*; 5 scenes, f. 214 b.
Grotesques follow to f. 220 b.
10. The sacristan who was tempted to steal the church plate, was caught, put in the stocks, and the devil substituted for him by the Virgin; 10 scenes, f. 221.
11. *The drowned monk*; 3 scenes, f. 226.
12. The Virgin heals a sick clerk; 1 scene, f. 227 b.
13. The illiterate monk who only knew his *Ave*: a lily grew out of his mouth when he died; 2 scenes, f. 228.
Story of St. Eustace, f. 229-240
Story of St. Dunstan (?), f. 241-250.
Story of three kings, unidentified, including a scene of the weighing of souls (f. 267 a), from f. 251-268 a.
Story of St. Mary of Egypt; f. 268 b-290 a.
A story of romantic character, unidentified, f. 290 b-315 a.

CAREW-POYNTEZ-HORAE.

1. *Story of S. George and Julian*, 4 scenes, f. 151 b—153 a.
2. The Virgin heals a sick clerk, f. 153 b.
3. A similar scene, f. 154 a.
4. *The temptation of the Pope*, 6 scenes, f. 154 b.
5. The illiterate monk, 2 scenes, f. 157 b.
6. *The drowned monk*, 2 scenes, f. 158 b.
7. The thievish sacristan; 11 scenes, f. 159 b.
8. *The unchaste Abbess*; 3 scenes, f. 165.
9. *The monk and the lady*; 9 scenes, f. 166 b.
10. *The woodman healed*; 1 scene, f. 167.
11. The story of Amoras, who sold his wife to the devil, 7 scenes, f. 167 b.
12. *Theophilus*; 12 scenes, f. 175.
13. The pious painter; 3 scenes, f. 181.
Three miracles of the Sacrament follow.
14. The Jew boy in the oven; 2 scenes, f. 187 b.

Q. MARY'S PRAYER-BOOK.

1. *Theophilus*, 2 scenes, f. 204 b.
2. *A man drowned*, 1 scene, f. 205 b.
3. The thief Ebbo, saved on the gallows, 1 scene, f. 206 a.
4. A woman saved from the devil, 1 scene, f. 206 b.
5. A drunken sacristan, f. 207.
6. The Jew boy in the oven, 2 scenes, f. 207 b.
7. *The unchaste Abbess*, 2 scenes, f. 208 b.
8. The illiterate monk; 2 scenes, f. 209 b.
9. The pious painter; 2 scenes, f. 210 b.
10. *The woodman healed*, f. 211 b.
11. An illiterate priest reinstated 3 scenes, f. 212.
12. *The drowned monk*, f. 213 b.
13. Miracle at Mt. S. Michel, f. 214, 2 obscure scenes.
14. Miracle of the gospel-case or corporal at Clusa, f. 215.

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| 15. Amoras ; 2 scenes, f. 216 b. | 23. Death of the girl Musa (?), f. 225 b. |
| 16. A matron accused by the Devil, f. 217 b. | 24. The mass of S. Bonnet, f. 226 b. |
| 17. <i>The nun who left her cloister</i> , f. 218 b.
2 more obscure scenes. | 25. The youth who would not curse the Virgin, f. 227 b. |
| 18. The chaplain betrothed to the Virgin, 3 scenes, f. 220 b. | 26. A vision of the Virgin and her train, f. 228 b. |
| 19. The illiterate monk (again), f. 221 b. | 27. A woman who took the image of Christ as hostage for her captive son, f. 229 b. |
| 20. <i>St. George and Julian</i> , f. 222 b. | 28. A sick clerk healed by the Virgin's milk, f. 230 b. |
| 21. The betrothed man who became a monk, f. 223 b. | 29. Intercession for a soul by the Virgin, f. 231 b. |
| 22. Abbot Elsin saved at sea, f. 224 b. | |

The source of the frescoes at Eton and Winchester is the collection of miracles extracted from the unidentified *Mariale Magnum* by Vincent of Beauvais, in his *Speculum Historiale*, lib. viii.

ETON COLLEGE CHAPEL.

North Side, Upper Row from West.

1. a. Lower half of saint with scroll.
b. The vision of S. Michael on the Mole of Hadrian.
2. a. Lower half of saint with girdle (?).
b. The steward of a nobleman is found to be the Devil.
3. a. Lower half of saint with scroll.
b. The illiterate monk ; his burial.
4. a. Lower half of saint with scroll.
b. The sick clerk healed by the Virgin.
5. a. Lower half of saint with scroll.
b. The champion of the Virgin helped by her (?).
6. a. Gone.
b. The pious painter saved.
7. a. Lower half of saint with scroll.
b. A dicer who blasphemed the Virgin struck dead.
8. a. Gone
b. Gone.
9. A single figure gone ; probably the Virgin.

Lower Row from West.

1. a. S. Sativola with scythe.
b. A woman who died unshriven revived.
 2. a. Virgin leading a dragon by a band ; S. Martha.
b. The woman who took the image of Christ as a hostage.
 3. a. S. Etheldreda, or S. Rhadegund, a crowned abbess.
b. The lady who, on Purification Day, had a vision of the Virgin attending Mass.
 4. a. A Virgin holding three loaves or eggs. S. Elizabeth (?).
b. Gone.
 5. a. b. Gone.
 6. a. Gone.
b. Amoras and the devil.
 7. a. S. Margaret emerges from the dragon.
b. A man throws a stone at the Virgin's image, which bleeds ; and he dies.
 8. a. Gone.
b. Abbot Elsin saved at sea.
 9. Single figure. A Virgin, her attribute gone.
- South Side, Upper Row from East.*
1. a. Gabriel.
b. The Assumption.

2. *a.* Drapery and sleeve only left (S. Luke).
b. Funeral of the Virgin, and miracle of the Jew who tried to upset the bier.
3. *a.* S. Ambrose.
b. Theophilus and the devil.
4. *a.* Gone. (S. John).
b. S. John Damascene's hand restored to him.
5. *a.* S. Gregory.
b. A beam at Constantinople raised by the Virgin's help.
6. *a.* S. Augustine.
b. A youth who betrothed himself to a statue of the Virgin.
7. *a.* S. Matthew.
b. The Vision of S. Bonnet.
8. *a.* S. Jerome with lion at his feet.
b. The Jew boy in the oven.
- 9 (single figure). Beardless male saint (S. Mark).
Lower Row, from East.
 The large frescoes give the story of the Empress falsely accused (see Maxwell-Lyte's "History of Eton College," for an abridgement in English).
1. *a.* S. Catherine with sword.
b. Departure of the Emperor; the Emperor imprisons his brother.
2. *a.* S. Barbara with tower.
b. The brother accuses the Empress; she is banished.
3. *a.* S. Apollonia with the tooth and forceps.
b. The Empress attacked by robbers.
4. *a, b.* Gone.
5. *a, b.* Gone.
6. *a.* S. Dorothea with basket of flowers.
b. The Empress heals the sick.
7. *a.* Virgin with palm and book (S. Lucy or S. Christina?).
b. The Empress heals her brother-in-law.
8. *a.* S. Juliana holding the devil in a chain.
b. The Empress enters a convent.
- 9 (single figure). S. Agnes (?) with sword, or S. Cecilia.

WINCHESTER LADY CHAPEL.

Italicised items are those which appear at Eton.

- South Side, Upper Row from East.*
1. *Youth betrothed to statue of the Virgin.*
2. Prior Silkstede. (1498-1524)
3. *Jew boy in oven.*
4. *The image taken as hostage.*
5. The beam at Constantinople raised.
6. The drowned Monk.
7. Abbot Elsin saved at sea.
Lower Row from East.
1. Illiterate monk reinstated.
 2. (Piscina).
 3. *Vision on the Mole of Hadrian.*
 4. Miracle at Mont S. Michel.
 5. *Woman unshriven is revived.*
 6. *The stone cast at the Virgin's image.*
7. *The vision of the lady on Purification Day.*
- North Side, Upper Row from East.*
1. *S. John Damascene's hand restored*
2. *The illiterate monk.*
3. The annunciation.
4. *The devil detected as steward.*
5. *A sick clerk healed.*
6. Quite effaced.
Lower Row from East.
1. The thief Ebbo.
2. *The pious painter.*
3. Door.
4. S. Basil interceding with Julian the Apostate.
5. S. George raised by the Virgin to fight against Julian
6. S. George kills Julian.