

ART. XXXVI.—*Sculptured Runic Grave-Block at Dearham, W. Cumberland, date about A.D. 850-950.* By Prof. GEORGE STEPHENS, F.S.A., and the Rev. W. S. CALVERLEY.* *From drawings, light-bilds and rubbings forwarded by the Rev. W. S. CALVERLEY. Engraved by Prof. MAGNUS PETERSEN, ½th.*

BADLY engraved by Daniel and Samuel Lysons in their *Magna Britannia*, Vol. iv., Cumberland, 4to, London 1816, a work of which no copy exists in Denmark. These gentlemen had not discovered the Latin and Runic inscriptions, which were first found by the Rev. W. S. Calverley, during repairs of his church in 1882. All that Dr. John Stuart, in his magnificent “*Sculptured Stones of Scotland*,” folio, Vol. ii., Edinburgh 1867, Notices p. 18, says of this block is, that it is “covered with rude sculpture,” and was probably part of an ancient cross; but he gives no authority for this last mistaken opinion.

This sarcophagus has therefore hitherto been practically unknown, and we must all thank the zeal and care with which Mr. Calverley has worked upon it. At my request he has favored me with the following excellent details, with permission to use them here:—

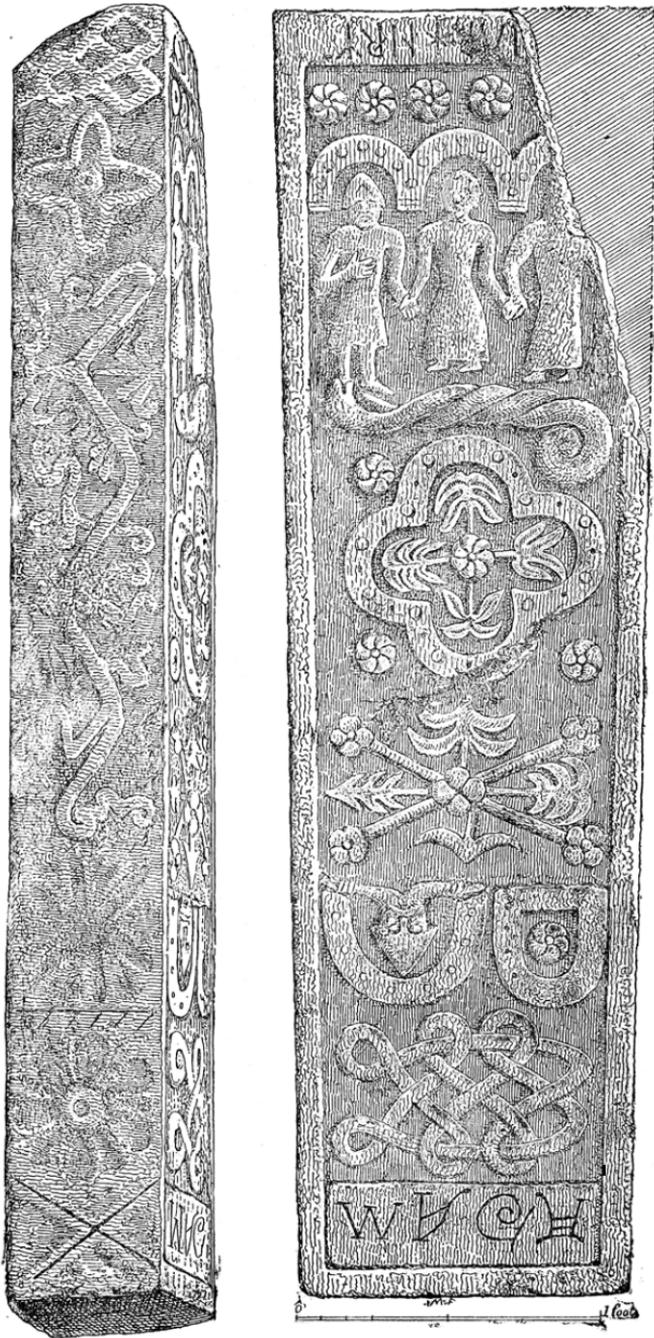
Dearham Vicarage, Carlisle.

May 16, 1882.

Dearham Church, in the Diocese of Carlisle, stands on a howe something more than 100 feet above the sea level and at a distance, in a direct line, of two miles from the shore of the Solway and two miles and a half from the mouth of the river Ellen, eastward. This neck of land slopes quickly down on the east and north sides to Rowbeck, whilst on the west and south two little ghylls running into the beck, almost divide the peninsula from the main land. The position is naturally strong. On the opposite side of Rowbeck, and facing the

* Printed from advance sheets, kindly furnished by Professor Stephens, of “*Old Northern Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England*.”

east



east of the Church, is a farm-house, Dearham Hall, formerly the home of the Dearhams and probably fortified. At the west end of the Church stands a massive, square, battlemented Tower, built on to the old Church late in the 13th century or early in the 14th. It is 40 feet high or thereabouts so that, standing in the hollow of the projecting neck of land, it commands the tops of the undulations over the surrounding district for a great distance, without itself becoming conspicuous. It would thus be a valuable shelter, beacon and defence during the border troubles.

Many coffin lids or sepulchral slabs, bearing foliated Crosses with Calvary steps and window tracery and the Sword and Shears and Book, are found built as copings to the Churchyard wall and porch, and seats in the porch.* This last was added in the decorated period.

The most easterly portion of the Chancel has been added to a former Chancel in the Early English period. That former Chancel was added to the nave during the Norman period. The two small original Norman windows of fine hewn masonry, which threw light upon the altar of that day, still remain. The original stone Church probably corresponded in length to the present Nave, which is now being restored and enlarged by the addition of an aisle on the North side. This length was about 48 feet. The foundations of the eastern and western walls were found under the present chancel and tower arches during the recent works.—In the south wall towards the east end was a recess in the wall. In the place where the piscina should be, it still remains. Beneath this recess and inside the Church, south of the altar of that early Church, there had been many burials. Upon trying the ground with an iron rod and finding an obstruction at a depth of about 5 feet, and much water, it was determined to remove the soil carefully and prove the cause of the dampness, so as to remove it if possible. Close to the wall and only a few inches from the surface, a burial was observed facing eastward. No traces of any coffin or envelopment, a veritable illustration of "earth to earth." Each bone lay bedded in the mould, in perfect order. The workmen, who were most careful and reverent, were ordered to step aside and excavate alongside the burial; but with a like result at a greater depth. A second time there was made a new beginning, and now, at a somewhat greater depth and partially under the superincumbent death-heap (in its turn an earlier burial than the first), lay one who

* Transactions of this Society, Part i., Vol. v., Art. xviii. Part i., Vol. vi., Art. xxii. These fragments, &c., have been preserved and together with many others which have come to light during the restoration and enlargement of the church have been placed in the walls of the new aisle and of the porch that they may tell their hidden tale of the past once more to the people.

had

had been interred with a long straight Wand—without bark upon it—adown his body, but in no coffin. At least no traces of such could be seen. There were wet leaves amongst the clayey soil, preserved through ages in the cold and airless humidity of this grave, so different from the dry pure earth of the upper ones. A bed of Hazel or Ivy leaves had been laid for the dead body, and probably his Cross (an untooled Hazel wand with a cross piece) was then laid upon him.

But what was the cause of the dampness and thus the preservation of these frail leaves, and this wand only half an inch in diameter? It was, that beneath this grave and a little to the side was a coffin of oak; at each end its sides projected, having been cut away by an adze or hatchet, so as to form at each end two handles. The lid had fallen in. The iron nails were still to be seen. Of the body but few the remains. The teeth were ground down close to the jawbone. The burial had been placed in the clay, from which no water could escape, and hence the preservation of the wood. This I raised up, and beneath it, on the bottom of the grave, still lay, apparently almost as perfect as when placed there, 2 Hazel wands, thus X, as a St. Andrew's Cross, with the bark still on them and the silvery light to show they *were* Hazel when dry. Similar Hazel wands were above the coffin, *flattened* on one side and with the bark on, whereas the *first*-mentioned wand was *round* and had evidently been purposely peeled. Whether the crossed wands have any special significance or were tied round the coffin, which was evidently intended to be carried, I cannot say. I would only remind you of the St. Andrew's Cross and the thunderbolts on the Dearham Runic Slab, and of the four like Crosses at the foot of the famous Cross in the Dearham churchyard.

In connection with these burials and Hazel wands I would mention, that St. Kentigern [died 601]* was the apostle of Strathclyde. There is a story or legend about him to this effect:—"Some one who had a spite against him put out all the fires of the monastery. Hereupon St. Kentigern snatched up a green Hazel bough, and in the name of the Holy Trinity blessed it and blowed upon it. Immediately, by fire sent down from heaven, the bough produced a great flame, and the Saint lighted the candles for the vigils. On this, the light ceased from the wood." I think these facts tend to prove St. Kentigern's influence in connection with this coast.

To return to the Church. I do not know to whom it was dedicated. The stones of which it was built are the usual square-faced long wedge-like red sandstone blocks used by the Romans at their camps.

* ? (The octave of the Epiphany, Jan. 13, A. D. 603) W. S. C.

Many still retain the Roman tooling. Amongst them, during the work of restoration, I have discovered the top of an elegant little Roman Altar; but, unfortunately, the inscription is gone. The Roman road from the station at Ellenborough on the Solway, by Papcastle to Keswick, runs within a mile of the Church; from this Ellenborough station, or from some nearer Roman look-out, the stones of the old Church would be carried.—According to his biographer, St. Kentigern journeys from Carlisle to Keswick and there erects a Cross, whence the place afterwards takes the name of Crossthwaite. He then makes for the sea, and so along the coastlands towards Wales. Thus all along the Roman road we have evidences of mission stations, which may have been founded or re-invigorated by him.

“We have two roads leading over the old common, from *Ellenborough* and *Ewanrigg* and past *Kirkborough* and *Hayborough*, still called *Crosshow* loanings, and another from *Craikhow*. All run to the Church, where stood the Cross before the first stone Church, and perhaps before either St. Cuthbert’s or St. Kentigern’s time. Another early mission station stood between Dearham and the sea, at *Cross-steanonby*, now *Cross-canonby*, and another at *Gill-cru* on the inland side of Dearham.

“The Dearham slab, as is well known, was over the North doorway of the Church, whence I took it out. But, besides being so badly engraved by Lysons, its Roman and Runic letterings were unknown. They were buried under many coats of whitewash and plaster. How much we are indebted to this shielding plaster, we cannot say! Now that the stone has been taken down, during the repairs, all is clear. It was intended to be recumbent, not to stand upright, and is sculptured only on the top and on one long side. Thus it was originally placed alongside a wall, or in a recess in a wall, where the further side and the ends would not be seen.—It is of yellowish sandstone, probably from the old quarry near the junction of Row-beck with the Ellen. Length, 4 feet 3 inches and a quarter; least width at foot, 13 inches; greatest width, 15 inches; depth, 6 inches.—On the top, a raised border runs round the slab, 1 inch in width, but 2 inches at the runic end. The width of the panel bearing the Roman letters is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.—At the right corner of the upper or broader end a piece has broken away, carrying with it part of the third figure and the beginning of the runic writing. Sufficient remains to show, that we have here a representation of the fall and restoration of humanity, in which the seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpent’s head, tho that Serpent bruise his heel. (Genesis, 3, 15). * Under the runes, 7 re-

* Three of these revolving bodies have been broken away.

volving bodies whirl above the tabernacle-work of the three round arches, each studded with 8 symbolic pellets, under which are *Adam*, in whom all die, hand in hand with the *Woman*, and with *Christ* in whom all are made alive again. Beneath, are 2 Serpents, one biting the foot of a mitred man, * “the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Peter, 2, 25); the other with bruised head, down twisted. Something is left of further sculpture, running up the broken part.—Then comes a mysterious quatrefoil, the centre occupied by a revolving body which throws out 4 tongues of flame or arrows of fire at right angles with each other, whilst each arch of the sign is studded with *raised flat pellets* and *incised points*, arranged alternately, each arch containing 4 pellets and 3 points, the whole sign 28 pellets and points in all. Outside the quatrefoil, in 3 of the angles, again revolve the whirling body. What can this be but the Sun and Moon, the 7 days of the week, the 4 weeks of the month or 28 day, of which *four* are the great Holy days the Sundays?—Then another strange sign, in which Thunder-bolts and Lighting-arrows take the form of a St. Andrew’s Cross and a Greek Cross.—Next, an archway, something of the shape of a horse-shoe, studded with points (only 4 left), with the revolving sphere again in its centre; beside it, a mitred head under a canopy or halo or arch, studded with 8 flat pellets—So comes the emblem of Eternity or of the Ancient of Days, the fret without beginning and without end.—All the sculptures on this upper side or face are *in relief*.

“The front side has no border, and most of its sculptures are *incised*. Beginning on the right, we have the ancient Cross sign known as St. Andrew’s.—Next, I think, the Sun in all his glory, or perhaps the earth.—Then a straight perpendicular line, with 5 side-strokes. Seemingly, too regular to be chisel-marks, tho I dare not give them any meaning.—Next a sort of revolving body throwing out rays of light, the 6 principal being slightly curved, shewing *active motion*. This may be the Sun. Each figure has 6 large and 6 small rays, which I think correspond to 12 hours day and 12 hours night, 7 such days being a week, of which 4 are a month (4 Sundays), of which 12 are a year.—To the left is an inflected or deflected rod, one end taking the form of a crook. The whole has budded and floriated, and the trefoil is plainly visible amongst the foliations, as also is the arrow-lightning sign.—Further left, a 4-lobed Star, followed by diamond or losenge work (a bit of a corner knocked off).—The (12 hour’s light and 12 night hours, or full) day of active life of our Bis-

* “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

hop,

hop,* whose Staff has budded and been fruitful among the worshippers of the Sun or Thunderer, is over. He enters Eternity, with the guiding Star before him, which has the shape of the Cross.—What is certain is, that this Runic Slab must be *earlier* than the North doorway of our Norman Church, over which it was placed as mere building-stuff.

W. S. Calverley.”

After this exhaustive and valuable paper, I have little to say. I look upon this Slab as excessively costly, not only because it bears runes, but also as giving us new material in that *difficult* study—chiefly for want of monuments—the *oldest* Christian art-symbols. All that I can clearly see is, that Mr. Calverley has rightly identified the principal scene. Man fallen and Man redeemed, here shown in a masterly picture full of deep meaning, which I have *never seen before*. What strikes us is, that Adam and Eve are *draped*. But this only shows that the treatment is conventional. It is not the scene in Paradise, it is the Man-kind, the Human Race, for whom Christ died. And so the charming naive handling of the Serpent, his revenge and his punishment shown on the same plane by doubling his form, as so often in olden art, pagan and Christian.—We must wait for fresh finds, before we can speak with any certainty on the other symbols, which may have belonged to an individual local artist or thinker, rather than to a school.

My approximate *date* is founded on the stone itself being old building-rubbish from Pre-Norman times, from its bearing Old-Northern Runes together with Roman letters later than the time of Charlemagne, and from its antique ornamentation. It is the *second* Sarcophagus slab bearing runes known to me in England, the *first* being the Dover stone, 8th century, my Vol. 1, p. 465 and Vol 2, p. 865.

As to the *inscriptions*. The word ADAM is certainly the

* The dead man Adam may have been Bishop, Abbot or Prior. Can these heavenly signs together with the budded rod have been intended to symbolize the Queen of Heaven and Joseph's rod?—W.S.C.

name

name of the deceast, and is not uncommon in early as in latter days. He may well have been a Bishop or Abbot, or some high ecclesiastic. With regard to the runes. The date makes it unlikely that they should be the later or Scandinavian. The corner being broken off here, some 4 staves or so are gone *at the beginning*, while there never has been any other letter after the last **Y** on the right, Now *if* later runes, we get, in the complete word, HNLÆRM, the Æ and R being a bind. But this gives no meaning, and contractions are very unlikely here, as we expect the usual prayer-formula, which would be made very clear. All things show, therefore, that we must take the inscription to have been in the *Old-Northern* letters. In this case *the first* stave in this last vocable is the usual bind for GI, as on the Dover stone (GIYOSLHĒARD) elsewhere, while *the last* will be the usual O. N. mark for A. We thus get GI-NIÆRA. We at once recognize this as good Old-English, 3 s. pres. subjunctive, *may-he-nÆRE*, *help, save*, the verb itself being widely known in Scando-Gothic dialects, from Mæso-Gothic ganASYAN, to save, *active*; ganISAN, to be saved, *neuter*; Old-English gENERIAN, GENESAN; Ohg. giNERIAN; O. Fris. NERA; O. Icel. and O. Swedish NÆRA; Danish NÆRE, downwards. In some talks it sinks to the meaning of *to nourish, feed*. And as we have in Old-English and elsewhere HÆLEND (the Healer, the Saviour) for JESUS or CHRIST, so we have also NERIGEND, NERIEND for God and Christ. But in these far-off runic times, among the many verbs used to express this idea of Salvation and Protection for the departed friend (such as HELP, LETE, SEE, &c.), we have never yet found this particular verb NERIAN. In my opinion this is only from paucity of monuments, what we have being as nothing to what we have lost, and new runic words and formulas yearly coming in as new monuments come in. I cannot therefore but look on this resting as in Old Northern staves, and regard this as giving the first example of this prayer for the dead with this particular word.—

word.—The letter before it is a broken \uparrow (L), and \updownarrow (U), and then a broken \updownarrow (S), thus SUL, *soul*, in the accusative, (a spelling instead of the usual SAUL, which is also found elsewhere). Remains the first word, broken away. This must have been KRIST (the ST carved separately, or in one, as a bind \updownarrow), as on the Kilbar stone, p. 315 in this volume. The whole will then have been :

ADAM.

(krist s)U(L) GI—NIÆRA.

May-Christ his-SOUL NÆRE (save, bless)!

In this case we have here -A as the mark of the 3 person sing. of the present subjunctive, it afterwards falling to -E. But this is a further proof of the likelihood of my reading, for we expect this archaic sound on so very old a monument. The \updownarrow (Æ), in the bind for ÆR, also like the λ for A on the Brough stone) an early rarity in England.

NOTE ON THE DISCOVERY OF HAZEL WANDS IN TOMBS :

BY THE EDITOR.

Many instances of such are on record. In the Handbook to the York Museum by Wellbeloved, seventh edition, p. 151, is mention of two coffins of wood of the Anglian, or Anglo-Saxon period, formed by splitting the trunks of oaks longitudinally. These were found in 1876 in the Church Hill, Selby, near the Ouse. In both of these coffins rods and branches of hazel were discovered, and some fragments, together with the coffins, are now in York Museum.

A slender hazel wand and some shells were found in the grave of Richard Mayo, Bishop of Hereford, 1504 to 1516, Archæologia Vol. xxxi, p. 25. Dean Merewether in the Archæologia states that other instances have occurred at Hereford, and Mr. Albert Way conjectures "that the hazel wand is the thin wand, which is not unfrequently seen in representations of pilgrims in XVth century art, tied up with the bourdon, or pilgrim's staff, properly so called. I had always taken this thin wand for a consecrated taper; but it seems not unlikely that as the pilgrim picked up a few shells on the shore of Galicia,

Galicia, as found by you in the grave, so the usage obtained that he should cut a stick, as he went along, and bring it away with him as a token, tied up with his bourdon, and that, with the shells, this wand was preserved, to be finally placed in the grave. I have made inquiries in France, and elsewhere, and can hear of no similar instance of interment." *Ibid* p. 253.

In this connection it may be noted that on a sepulchral slab in the tower of Brigham Church in Cumberland is a long wand of cane or bamboo, and it has been conjectured that this slab commemorated a pilgrim.*

On the examination of the tomb of St. Richard, Bishop of Chichester, A.D. 1245-1253, it was observed that "on the surface lay fragments of hazel wands, or branches, such probably, as pilgrims were accustomed to cut by the way." *Archæological Journal*, Vol. iii., p. 263. The "probably &c.," is merely Mr. Way's conjecture. But in the *Archæologia*, Vol. xxxvi., p. 129 (The Graves of the Alemanni at Oberflacht in Suabia by W. M. Wylie) several instances are given of hazel wands found with interments in *totten-baüme* or hollowed trees. In one instance the wand is described as a "white, barked, hazel rod." Hazel nuts occurred in many of the coffins, and hazel nuts also occurred in connection with the interments in *totten-baüme* found near Haltwhistle. *Archæologia*, Vol. 44, p. 9.

The Abbe Cochet found a hazel wand in a stone coffin, which he assigned to the 12th century, at Etran near Dieppe. He says "Quel pouvait etre le sens de cette verge ou le motif de ce dépôt. Je l'ignore : mais ce que je puis assurer, c'est que le fait n'est pas sans exemple dans les sépultures chrétiennes de cette époque, et même dans les sépultures de la période franque." *Archæologia*, Vol. xxxix, p. 128. And he gives several examples.

The Oberflacht graves are beyond doubt heathen interments, and carry the practice back to very remote times. But whatever may have been its original significance, it was continued in Christian times. Dearham is the only instance I can find of the crossed wands: and at Dearham we have both peeled and unpeeled wands.

Hazel staves had some mystic import. In the Eigel Saga we find the judges at a solemn trial fenced in from the crowd by a circle of hazel rods, or staves. A white crowned snake, dwelling beneath a hazel bush, plays its part in German superstition, under the name of the hazel worm. But it elsewhere appears under the same tree in human form clothed in white, and the pagan fairy afterwards becomes the Madonna.

* Another suggestion is that the wand is a cloth measure, but the divisions are at irregular intervals.